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History of Leicester during th



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PLAN
OF THE OPERATIONS AGAINST
THE TOWN OF
LEICESTER.
during the siege of
1645.

of Sir B. Ashley's Division

THE
HISTORY OF LEICESTER
DURING THE
GREAT CIVIL WAR;

A LECTURE,
DELIVERED TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
LEICESTER MECHANICS' INSTITUTE,

NOVEMBER 4, 1839.

BY
J. F. HOLLINGS, V. P.

Ἄνδρὶ δὲ τυράννῳ ἡ πόλει ἀρχὴν ἐχούσῃ οὐδὲν ἄλογον ὅ τι
συμφέρων, οὐδ' οἰκείον ὅ τι μὴ πιστόν· πρὸς ἕκαστα δὲ δεῖ ἡ
ἐχθρὸν ἢ φίλον μετὰ καιροῦ γίνεσθαι.

Τὰ μὲν παλαιὰ καὶ μέγιστα τοιοῦτοι ἡξιώσαμεν εἶναι.

THUCYDIDES.

LEICESTER:
PRINTED BY COMBE AND CROSSLEY.

PREFACE.

THE Author of the following Lecture is aware that some explanation is due to the Committee of the Mechanics' Institute, for the length of time which has elapsed between its delivery at the New Hall and his placing it at their disposal. The delay, however, has been altogether unavoidable, and occasioned by circumstances over which he has had little controul; since in order to render the paper as free from errors as possible, it was thought best to procure, through the medium of friends resident in London, entire transcripts of two pamphlets in the British Museum, from which extracts alone had been formerly made. This has necessarily, to a certain extent, delayed its appearance; but an opportunity has been at the same time afforded, of which the Author has willingly availed himself, of more carefully revising the subject, for the purpose of correcting any slight inaccuracies of which he might have been guilty, and of adding notes to such passages as might seem to need additional illustration. In its present form, it is believed that no material circumstance on record ^a connected with the History of

^a It should be observed, that in relation to some events of the Civil War in Leicestershire, no detailed information can be procured. There is reason to believe, for instance, that Bagworth House, so long held as a garrison by the Parliamentarians, was not taken without considerable resistance. Mention moreover is incidentally made of a defeat given to the royalists by the Leicester horse under Captain Hacker, upon Bagworth heath, perhaps on the ground still denominated "Battle Flat," in which several of the vanquished party were killed and wounded, and sixty of their number made prisoners, and of another called "the defeat of Milton," in which forty-five of the enemy were taken by the same officer. But on all particulars relative to these encounters, which are only recorded in one pamphlet and of which not even the dates are ascertainable, the writers of the time are entirely silent. The Author avails himself of this opportunity of mentioning, in reference to a point alluded to in page 28 as doubtful, viz. the presence of the Leicester forces, under Lord Grey of Grooby, at the first battle of Newbury, that he has since met with an entry in Whitlocke's Memorials, which

the County during the great Civil War has been omitted, and that no statement has been made which would not, upon unbiassed consideration, appear to be supported upon the best evidence; although as it regards some facts the truth is not at first sight easily discoverable, the testimonies of contemporary writers being often scarcely reconcileable—in a few instances directly contradictory. On one point the author can speak with confidence—that it has been his endeavour to observe a strict impartiality in every particular, and that he has studiously avoided giving any thing like the colouring of party to what has been intended to serve simply as a connected Narrative of the events in which the Town of Leieester was more directly concerned during the contest of Charles the First with his Parliament, in default of such an account from any of our local historians.

With respect to the plan of operations against the Town during the Siege, the reader will hardly require to be informed, that the line of defence laid down in it, is in some degree conjectural; it being impossible at the present day to ascertain the precise situation of works which were demolished soon after their completion, the site of which moreover is now for the most part covered by buildings. That it is not materially inaccurate, however, might be argued from various minute points of evidence, which it would be tedious and little interesting to mention at length. The plan has been prepared by Mr. Lee, from one kindly drawn to scale by Mr. Laurance, from the early sketch of Speed, and the more accurate map of Stukeley, constructed in 1745. For the other illustrations of the Lecture the Institute is indebted to the able pencil of Mr. B. F. Seott. Mr. Flower has also contributed one of his valuable drawings—a part of Prince Rupert's tower, taken in 1821, of which the woodcut by Mr. Burton at the end of the Lecture is a reduced copy.

seems to intimate their having been engaged in that fiercely disputed action. "Sept. 25, 1643. The Lord Grey of Grooby, Sir Philip Stapleton, and divers other members of the House, and divers officers of the army, received the thanks of the House for their services done in the late Gloucester journey and fight at Newbury."

A LECTURE.

ETC.

AMONG the many subjects which engage and exercise the attention of the mind of man, the study of what is usually termed Local History must be regarded as neither the least interesting nor the least important. This is so obvious a truism, that I might almost be expected to apologise for using it as an introduction to this evening's lecture. Yet readily admitted as it may be by most among us, it is, notwithstanding, one, which to a very considerable extent is daily meeting with what closely resembles a practical denial. Carefully educated from our childhood in all particulars connected with the rise and decay of the leading states of antiquity, it happens in far too many instances, by a singular perversion, no less of taste than of judgment, that the annals of our own nation are comparatively neglected: still more frequently, that, in regard to much relating to the immediate locality in which our lives are passed, we are contented to remain alike incurious and uninformed; and unaccountable as the fact may appear, it is not only too generally acknowledged to admit of any doubt respecting it, but easily ascertainable by every person who will take the trouble of verifying it by his own experience—that in the pursuit of investigations having reference to the history or antiquities of a particular district, the best and most valuable assistance is for the most part to be found, not as might be expected, among the inhabitants themselves, but among those living at a distance from the spot. I shall not stop to consider whether this is one of the features peculiar to our national character, or whether it is merely the general result of circumstances unrestricted to any country in their operation, and productive of uniform

effects, wherever their influence is experienced. Thus much however I do not hesitate to assert—that if such a want of curiosity and information is unjustifiable any where, it is peculiarly so in the great and flourishing town in which we are residents. For where, let me ask, throughout a land abounding in historical associations of absorbing interest, shall we find a region ennobled to a greater degree by recollections of the past, than that which lies immediately around us? or to what era of our existence as a nation can we refer, which has not left its visible traces either within our walls; or along the course of that quiet river, which, as well from its unobtrusive beauty, as from the luxuriant pasturage which it mirrors, might be termed without any aid from imagination to substantiate its claim to the title, the Clitumnus of England? In no county is the long-extinct dominion of the earliest conquerors of our island recorded by more numerous or more legible signs. Our fields are yet furrowed by the entrenchments of their legions—our dwellings rest upon the very same foundations, which formerly supported villas constructed with truly Roman magnificence, and decorated with all the refinements of Roman taste. The most considerable and best authenticated remnant of the Civil Architecture of that once mighty Race stands in massive and mysterious stateliness in the midst of our teeming population; and the same path continues to thread our meadows, which more than sixteen centuries ago, witnessed the imposing march of the Legate or Tribune, at the head of his invincible array. I might mention that the Danish standard has floated ominously at our gates; and that the loud revelry of the Saxon Thane and the chant of the Saxon Monk have been heard on spots which now return the busy sounds of an honourable industry, the results of which are distributed to every part of the habitable globe; but I pass from the period of barbaric power, and even from the gorgeous visions of feudal pomp and splendour, although the name of “Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster” brings with it a host of recollections connected with himself and his princely line, briefly to allude to events of the greatest moment in the records of our country. Twice have the destinies of this kingdom been determined upon pitched fields in our immediate neighbourhood. Over our hills first arose the morning-star of the Reformation; and here in all probability was planned that movement of skilful and audacious

policy, to which the most efficient and justly valued branch of our representative Constitution owed its birth. On such topics, indeed, neither our time nor the immediate matter of our consideration to-night will allow us to dwell. Yet I cannot close these imperfect hints at the extent of the imperishable inheritance of memory bequeathed by our forefathers to their successors and representatives in this place, without adding, that, 'if rich in reminiscences connected with the principal occurrences of departed ages, we are no less so in that greatness of individual character, which has from time to time distinguished those, to whom our free slopes and peaceful vallies have given birth; and for some of whom we may fearlessly claim a superiority, I will not say over many of the great and good of our own nation, for this might appear an invidious remark; but assuredly over those, upon whom the most lavish and laboured eulogies of the classic writers of Greece and Rome have been so freely bestowed. If it is thought necessary to adduce a proof of this assertion, the task is easily accomplished. Throughout the whole compass of ancient literature, there is perhaps no portion better calculated to impress the imagination or awaken the sympathies, than the account of the last hours of the greatest of the sages of Athens, as given by the most illustrious member of his school. Yet elevated and exemplary as in every age it must appear, how far is the fortitude of the dying philosopher surpassed by the meek and modest heroism of one, to whose studies that celebrated scene was familiar, and whose image seems constantly to haunt us upon those melancholy heights consecrated to the recollection of her beauty, her genius, and untimely fate—of one, not called like the Athenian of old to undergo a sentence, which anticipated by but a brief space the natural termination of a life already fast verging to its close; the infliction of which moreover was attended by little in outward circumstances calculated to appal or to dismay, and alleviated in some measure by the presence of a circle of devoted and admiring friends;—but a feeble woman—a newly wedded wife—a recently saluted queen, summoned in the full hope and expectancy of youth to exchange the throne for the scaffold, and to expiate the ambition of others by submission to a doom unrelentingly inflicted in a manner the most terrible to her age and sex. An example worthy of all admiration, and on which no expression of praise could be thought

undeservedly bestowed ; and yet it is in our power to cite a still sublimer instance of heroic constancy than even this. I need scarcely say that I allude to that afforded by the great champion of Truth, whose retired dwelling yet exists among us to prompt, although not to perpetuate the recollection of his Christian integrity and, as I firmly believe, inspired fortitude ; who, bowed down by age, sickness, and long imprisonment, and weak in every thing but spirit, could yet exclaim in the prospect of a death of lingering agony, and with all its horrible apparatus in view, “Be of good cheer, brother ; we shall this day light up such a candle in England as I trust in God shall never be extinguished.” Surely these are subjects which, “citizens of no mean city” in other respects, we may well be excused for regarding with some degree of honest pride, no less than in making them matters of our constant reflection. Allow me to suggest too, that whatever value may be thought to belong to such local distinction as I have alluded to, and this value I believe to be not easily over-rated, it is at least characterized by one recommendation peculiar to itself—that of permanent continuance ; for although in the rivalry of arts, of commerce, and of wealth, we may easily be equalled or surpassed, let it be remembered that all such honour as is reflected upon our common dwelling place by the past and its associations is, so long as we refrain from diminishing it by any unfavourable contrast afforded by the present, unalterably and inalienably ours.

In passing from these general observations to the subject to which at this time we are called to give our more particular attention, it may be remarked, that among the many contests of a similar nature with which the annals of all nations are unhappily replete, none is so well entitled to the attention of the student of history, as that, in which the events I am about to submit to your notice form a striking and by no means inconsiderable episode. However brilliant may have been the military talent displayed in the civil or international struggles described by the Greek and Roman Historians, they all more or less partake of the same character as mere efforts of the brute force of the weak against the strong ; as exercises of the simplest instincts of our nature in the acquisition of territory or dominion, or resistance to subjugation at the hands of a foreign power ; and from this category I am disposed only partially if at all to exempt

the Peloponnesian war, and the civil discords which ended in the establishment of the Imperial dominion in Italy, which at the first glance might appear entitled to be considered as exceptions. The same observation holds good to a great extent when applied to the wars maintained by the armies either of the Eastern or Western Empire, during the earlier centuries of the Christian era. The descents of the various hordes of Northern savages upon the more fertile provinces of Europe, must of course be considered as movements solely instigated by a thirst for rapine and plunder; the disputes of the feudal nobility among themselves as not materially different from such movements either in motive or object; the numerous collisions between the armies of the Crescent and the Cross as the results of a mistaken though not unnatural fanaticism—and the insurrections of the Jacquerie in France and the somewhat similar convulsions in Flanders or in England, as but the wild and desperate efforts of an order of men driven frantic by oppression, and deprived, as well by the darkness of the times, as by a long established tyranny, of that intellectual strength, which alone could ensure success to their efforts or render them permanently beneficial. During the reigns of the long line of the Plantagenets of England; of the house of Valois in France; of the earlier successors of Rodolf of Hapsburg in Germany; or even in the history of the rival states of Italy in the middle ages, how little of pretext is to be discovered for the frightful waste of life by which those times of violence were distinguished, but such as may easily be resolved into the ambition either of an arbitrary monarch or of a selfish aristocracy. The age of Charles the Fifth, with whatever splendour of circumstance it may appear to be surrounded, affords but one or two approaches to a contradiction of the general rule, as in the insurrection under Padilla in Castile, or the well known league of Smalkalde. It is not therefore until we arrive at the tremendous struggle for independence in the Netherlands; the civil wars between the Catholics and Huguenots in France; the thirty years' war in Germany; and most especially that in our own country, in which the names of King and Parliament were for the first time used to signify opposite sentiments and opinions, that the Genins of Discord begins to assume a more exalted and enlightened character. Principles much more refined than any hitherto acknowledged, but of the utmost import-

ance to the well-being of society, are now for the first time discoverable in the manifestos of the contending parties. The whole fabric of social life, in its most complicated relations, is narrowly examined, to furnish arguments for either side of the questions at issue, and the true foundations on which that fabric rests more accurately ascertained in consequence. The pen moreover is used as an ally at least as extensively as the sword; a fact from which we may fairly infer the existence of the conviction among the belligerents, that it is comparatively useless to forge weapons against the persons of men while their minds continue unsubdued—that conviction is the best method of coercion—and that the attempt to prevent free discussion on subjects in which all are equally interested, can only be made successfully in those ages of darkness, of which such oppression is the natural offspring.

Viewed in reference to these characteristics, the Civil War maintained in England during the reign of Charles the First, appears to me pre-eminently distinguished from all of preceding, and indeed from most of subsequent times. To us, however, independently of more abstract considerations, it possesses peculiar interest. Our own fathers were the actors in that great and momentous struggle; our own hills and valleys—the ramparts of our own fortresses—in some instances the very streets of our own cities and towns constituted the theatre, where their devotion to the principles they had severally adopted was tried on the perilous edge of battle, or in the “imminent deadly breach.” Travel in whatever direction we may, the site of the dismantled fortress, the ruin yet tottering from the effect of the miner’s blast, the half-filled trench, or the tumulus crested with its rank vegetation, are constantly reminding us as well of the extensive character of the contest, as of the obstinacy with which it was maintained. The names of Cromwell, of Fairfax, and of Essex—of Rupert, Newcastle, and Montrose, are still familiar as household words upon our lips, and their frequent occurrence in our ordinary discourse, no less than their constant appearance in our works of fiction, is a sufficient indication of the power, with which those leading spirits of a memorable epoch continue to rule us from their urns. Nor is this influence to be wondered at—for if at any time within the memory of man, the powers of genius and of learning, high-souled constancy and resolution, a disinterested

abandonment of all selfish considerations, and a sincerity of purpose tried to the uttermost, but continuing unimpaired through evil and good report, were displayed in any civil convulsion, they were eminently conspicuous during that under review. Nor do I mean to confine these remarks to either of the great parties, between which the country was then divided. Whatever may be our individual opinions with respect to the important questions attempted to be determined by the sword's point, and this is neither the time nor place to express them, there is too much of pure and honourable principle manifest in the conduct of both the contending factions to warrant us in lightly censuring either. The truly conscientious martyr to any conviction demands in my estimation respect and applause; and if the cause of advancing freedom had in those days its illustrious confessors over whose untimely graves we justly lament, it is no less certain that there is enough in the magnanimous self-devotion for which the spirit of loyalty was at the same time remarkable, to constitute a full claim to our admiration and esteem. If on the one hand, briefly to refer to particular instances, the integrity of Hampden—the intrepidity of Hollis—the single-minded uprightness of Fairfax—the dignified patriotism of Manchester—are considered deserving objects of eulogy, we are surely no less compelled to yield our tribute of praise to the mingled gallantry and courtesy, the refined talents and generous bearing of him, who has earned the distinguished title of the “virtuous and the just,” and to look with no common degree of veneration upon that nobility of sentiment which inspired the golden numbers of Lovelace in the solitude of his prison, and cheered the chivalrous conqueror of Alderne and Kilsythe in the contemplation of his ignominious doom: nor do I envy that man his feelings, who, however unfavourable his judgment of the quarrel in which they fell, could contemplate unmoved or uninstructed the dauntless gallantry, and unshrinking firmness of resolve, which characterised the closing moments of a Derby, a Lucas, or a Lisle.

The first instance, in which the County of Leicester manifested any disposition to enter into disputes, in which it afterwards took so active a part, and during which it suffered so severely, seems to have been on the occasion of the famous remonstrance presented by the House of Commons in consequence of the King's attempting in

person to arrest the five members impeached by his Attorney-General, within the walls of the House itself, and certainly without anything like precedent to justify the proceeding. This ill-advised attempt took place in January, 1642, and on the 15th and 16th of the February following, petitions were presented from the County of Leicester to the Peers and Commons, singularly indicative of the extent to which the spirit of dissatisfaction had already spread in the Midland Counties, and which are of sufficient interest to deserve some notice. That addressed to the Peers sets forth—

“That as the pressing grievances and deadly distempers of the state ripened almost to the ruin of both were by the happy assembling of this Parliament abated, and a joyful expectation of their total abolishment raised in all well affected subjects, and as the dangerous influences of wicked counsels and worse designs since appearing in that most horrid and bloody rebellion of Ireland, in the various delays and obstructions cast in to hinder all Parliamentary proceedings, the desperate attempts against the peace of the King, Parliament and Kingdoms, especially in that violent unexampled breach of Parliament privilege lately made, had erewhile damped our hopes, renewed our fears, and thrown us into a sea of dangers and distractions; so now again the happy concurrence of this Honourable House with the House of Commons, already seen in sundry particulars, hath revived our hopes and filled our hearts with joy, and brought us, though afar distant in place, here to make a personal tender of our grateful hearts, obliged services, and utmost expressions of all humble thankfulness, for this your noble and ready compliance. We will serve you with our lives as freely as they were given us, and with our estates to their utmost value. Your safety shall be our happiness, your opposers our enemies, your dangers and harms as death to us. Our humble and earnest petition therefore is, that you would proceed to increase our joys, and strengthen our engagements and resolutions, by a constant concurrence of this Honourable House with the House of Commons in all their noble designs and endeavours for the public good, that delinquents may be brought to speedy and condign punishment, the counsellors, contrivers, and actors of that late surpassing breach of privilege may be manifested, their aims and intentions discovered, and their persons rewarded according to their deep demerits; and

that future dangers from our restless enemies may be prevented by a timely relief of bleeding Ireland, and a speedy perfection of this Kingdom's posture of defence. Then we doubt not but the end will crown our prayers, to the glory of God, the peace of the Church, the happy union of the King and Kingdom, with your eternal honours never to be blotted out by time or malice.—And as in duty bound we shall ever pray, &c.”

The Petition to the Commons, which, like the preceding document, will I think be considered far from ineloquently worded, after the usual forms of address, proceeds to state—

“That the reason why your Petitioners have not hitherto attended this Honourable House was not backwardness to serve you or want of affection, but the remoteness of their dwelling; for had we heard of your dangers and not of your safety, this we do boldly affirm, that the last drop of our blood had been freely and speedily hazarded in defence of your persons, and maintenance of your privileges. We need not entreat you to ease our great pressures, which in our souls, bodies, and estates, we have long groaned under, for we are most sensible of your care, wisdom, unwearied labour, and faithful endeavours to do what our hearts desire. We rest confident of your strong resolution for the relief of our miserable and distressed brethren of Ireland. Your remonstrance gives us satisfaction in what you declare, and for the reformation which you intend according to the Word of God, and we assure ourselves that you will not suffer idolatry in the Kingdom of England or Ireland. Therefore your petitioners most humbly pray, that the councillors and actors of that most horrid, high, and wicked attempt against his Majesty and the Parliament, and the very foundation of our Government, and also tending to the utter ruin of some of your Members, may be made public examples to all posterity; so that future times may never dare to contrive that, which instruments in this age of ours have endeavoured. We conceive ourselves exceedingly concerned in this; and the hazard of our own lives could not more affect us, which makes us restlessly to desire the bottom of this bloody design may be sounded. We cannot express the thanks we above many other Counties owe unto this Honourable House. Our estates—our lives—all are yours. The most faithful Preserver of men protect you and your honourable proceedings.”

I need not remind those present of the numerous contentions on various points of difference, which, after the remonstrance of the Commons had been presented, speedily brought the quarrel to its crisis, by the commencement of actual strife. It is well known that the question of the disposition of the standing force of the Kingdom afforded the last subject of dispute, before recourse was had to the decision of arms. On the first of March, 1642, the King refused his consent to the Bill for better ordering the Militia, or in other words, for preventing him from all power in the disposal of it; and after a short interval withdrew from Windsor to York. The Parliament soon afterwards proceeded to issue commissions and to raise troops upon their own authority, in the counties devoted to their interest, and Charles on his part to publish his commissions of array. The very first of these instruments was that intended for Leicestershire, and one of our own historians assures us, that in consequence of this, and of the proceedings which followed, our County may be considered as the actual cradle of the Civil War; although the previous refusal of Sir John Hotham to surrender the town of Hull at the King's summons,^a which was the first overt act of resistance to his authority, appears clearly to transfer the honour, if such it is to be esteemed, to another quarter. The Commission in question is preserved at length in Nichols' History, and elsewhere, and fully agrees with State Documents issued in much earlier reigns in the truly amusing and barbarous style of its Latinity. The parties to whom it is addressed are Henry Earl of Huntingdon,^b William Earl of Devon, Henry Hastings, Sir Henry Berkeley, Sir George Villiers, Sir Thomas Burton, Sir Henry Skipwith, Sir John Skeffington, Sir Richard Halford, Sir Woolstan Dixie, Sir Richard Roberts, Sir John Bale, Sir Thomas Hartop, Sir Erasmus de la Fountayne, Sir William Jones, Henry Hastings of Humberstone, George Ashby, John Pate, and Airedale Palmer, High Sheriff of the County. To these or any three of them, under pretence of the malice of public enemies, and the apprehension of an invasion of the Kingdom, power is given to arm, train, and array all of bodily ability, or of sufficient means, and to enlist soldiers both within and without the liberties of the County, to be conducted to the sea coast

^a April 23, 1642.

^b Fifth of that title. Born April 24, 1586; died Nov. 14, 1643, at the Castle of Ashby de la Zouch, leaving the Earldom to his eldest son Ferdinando.

or elsewhere, as might afterwards seem expedient; to erect balcfires or beacons, and to claim the assistance of all Barons, Sheriffs, Bailiffs, and Constables, in furtherance of the objects of the Commission. Those labouring under any bodily infirmity are required to furnish offensive and defensive weapons according to the amount of their property, as estimated by the Commissioners; and it is singular, that notwithstanding the almost universal use of fire-arms at that time, the Commission has been cautiously framed to agree in the letter with others set forth in more ancient periods, by specifying bows and arrows as the weapons to be supplied by those excused from personal service,^c and in designating the troops to be raised as archers as well as men at arms. In all its details the Commission is arbitrary and oppressive enough, but there can be no doubt, that if the argument of precedent had been allowed, many similar instruments might have been quoted in its favour.

Before this document, which bears date the eleventh of June, 1642, was transmitted from York to those to whom it was directed, a Parliamentary Commission, consisting of the Earl of Stamford, Lord Grey of Groby, Lord Ruthin, and Sir Arthur Haselrig, the latter one of the five Members of the Commons lately impeached at the King's command, and afterwards among the ablest officers in the ranks of his opponents, arrived at Leicester, and immediately endeavoured to

^c Ad arraiandos et triandos omnes et singulos homines ad arma ac homines armatos et sagittarios in comitatu prædicto, &c.—ac etiam ad distringendos omnes et ad inveniendam armaturam hominibus ad arma et hominibus armatis, ac arcus et sagittas.—*Commission of Array*.—The long bow, for so many centuries the most terrible and efficient weapon in the English armies, seems to have been formally abandoned for the use of the musket towards the close of the reign of Elizabeth. “And whereas,” says the Earl of Huntingdon writing to the Mayor of Leicester, April 29, 1598, “in the former order and proportion, taken in my late honourable brother's time, for the five hundred trained soldiers in this County levied, the town of Leicester was then charged with the furnishing of forty men, with twelve calivers, four muskets, eleven bows and arrows, eight carslets and pikes, and five bills; now their lordships' pleasures are, that all the bows and arrows and bills generally must be refused, and supplied with muskets; so that your proportion is twelve calivers, twenty muskets, and eight carslets with pikes. All which I require you and in her Majesty's name charge and command you forthwith to have in readiness, and withal to select and make choice of the forty men, to be very sufficient and able men, and likely to be restant, and no starters, or shifting persons, and presently to see them armed accordingly, that I may have them ready at an hour's warning, to take the view of them myself, and to deliver them over to such as I shall appoint for the arraigning and ordering of them.”

carry into effect the Counter-ordinance of the Parliament for calling out the trainbands. Their proceedings however were in some measure hindered by the appearance of a messenger with a Royal Proclamation condemning the muster. It was therefore thought necessary to assemble the Militia at five different places at some distance from Leicester, and the five companies constituting the whole force of the County, together with about 200 Volunteers, who had consented to enlist, were inspected separately and on successive days, at Broughton Astley, Kibworth, Melton Mowbray, Queneborough, and Copt Oak. In the mean time, Col. Henry Hastings, son of the Earl of Huntingdon, had reached Leicester with the King's Commission of Array, and commanded the High Sheriff to assemble the trainbands at the Rawdykes on Wednesday the 22nd of June. The necessary warrants were accordingly prepared, and a translation of the Commission was read before the Mayor, Thomas Rudyard, and the Town Council. The former was in consequence persuaded by Col. Hastings to allow a guard to be set upon the County Magazine; but before this step could be taken, the Earl of Stamford gaining information of the design, removed the greater part of the arms from the Southgate to the Newark, and from thence for their better security to his house at Bradgate. Both parties had in the mean time been in active correspondence with the chief authorities. The Parliament, on the first intimation of the issuing of the Commission of Array, determined strenuously to oppose it, and we accordingly find the following short and significant resolution upon the subject, among the minutes of their proceedings:—

“Resolved upon the question by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, Monday, 20th of June, 1642,—That this Commission of Array for Leicestershire is against law and against the liberty and property of the subject.” And again,—“That all those that are actors in putting the Commission of Array in execution, shall be esteemed as disturbers of the peace of the Kingdom, and betrayers of the liberty of the subject.”

These votes, together with the Commission, were ordered to be printed and distributed throughout the Kingdom, and directions were given to arrest Henry Hastings and five others of the same party,^d as delinquents, in consequence of their opposition to the

^d Viz. Henry Hastings of Humberstone, Sir Richard Halford, Kt. Martin

authority of the Parliament. The King on his part justified the Commission by Proclamations, citing the examples of James the First and Elizabeth, and was so far from disapproving of the conduct of the individuals against whom the resentment of the Commons was now especially directed, that he within a few days afterwards appointed Hastings to the office of High Sheriff^e in the place of Archdale Palmer, who although he had consented to issue Warrants under the Commission of Array, seems to have been on that occasion an unwilling supporter of the royal cause, to which he soon after showed himself in open opposition.

Two days before the time assigned in the Royal Commission for the assembling of the train bands, the Earl of Stamford raised a guard of 120 musketeers and 20 horse for the protection of his house at Bradgate. On the 21st Henry Hastings arrived at Loughborough from York, and early on the following morning, having collected about a hundred men, principally his own tenants, summoned from Derbyshire, whom he had armed with pikes and muskets, after proclaiming at the Market Cross of the town his readiness to supply all who would join him with weapons, set forward on his way towards Leicester. It was expected that this march would not be accomplished without bloodshed, and that the Earl of Stamford with his superior force would do every thing in his power to prevent it. No opposition however was made; the Earl contenting himself with standing on his defence, and Hastings having halted his followers about three miles from Leicester for the purpose of supplying them with ammunition, entered the town in regular array, with banners displayed and matches burning, and proceeding to the Horse Fair Leas (then an unenclosed space without the walls), since but few of the trainbands had assembled at the Rawdykes to meet him, harangued those present in favour of the King, and ended by reading his Commission publicly. The High Sheriff, who was upon the spot with a guard, immediately afterwards read the votes of the Parliament against it, and a messenger from the two Houses attempted to attach Colonel Hastings for treason. A struggle, attended with

Pate, Sir John Bale, and Master Gregory, Under Sheriff of the County of Leicester.

^e The Writ to this effect, which is preserved by Nichols in his History of Leicestershire, bears date the 25th of June, 1642.

considerable confusion and no small violence, ensued, which has been variously related. It is certain that swords were drawn and fire-arms levelled on both sides; that the High Sheriff and the Parliamentary Commissioners were threatened by the weapons of the Royalists; and that Col. Hastings, who had dismounted from his horse, was in imminent danger of being made prisoner, when he was rescued and re-mounted by some of the town's-people present, and enabled to regain his inn, the gates of which were instantly closed. The streets of Leicester presented a scene of general uproar, and the cavaliers have been accused of the utmost violence of language and demeanour towards the town's-people, and of uttering the most tremendous threats against the Earl of Stamford. It is unquestionably somewhat singular that no lives were lost, nor any very dangerous wounds inflicted in the affray. One authority ascribes this to a providential fall of rain which suddenly extinguished the matches in the muskets and petronels of the cavaliers and their opponents,^f but it is more probable that since the example of a serious encounter had not yet been set, neither party were willing to incur the odium of being the first to carry the quarrel to the issue of mortal combat. Hastings departed from the town the same night, but the arms of most of his retainers, according to the account transmitted to the Parliament, were seized by the town's-people, who by orders from

^f This circumstance, together with the succeeding tumult, is thus curiously described in the narration afterwards published by John Chambers and James Stanforth, the two persons charged with executing the Writ of the Parliament against Hastings and his companions:—"Then the cavaliers and the rest of the soldiers joining with the rude multitude, and about twenty-four parsons in canonical coats, well horsed, rode all towards the town, with loud exclamations, 'A King,' and others 'For a King,' 'For a King,' in a strange and unheard-of manner, Capt. Worsley giving the word of command to the soldiers, 'Make ready, make ready,' which as they were proceeding to do, a sudden and extraordinary abundance of rain falling, hindered the soldiers from firing. Then the said Master Walter Hastings endeavoured to ride over the said Chambers, who to prevent that got up a high hank, whereon a rude fellow standing, struck him with a cluh on the breast, and with the violence thereof the said Chambers fell backwards into a ditch; but as soon as his strength served him to recover himself, he made all the haste he possibly could toward the town to escape murdering. Then they followed Master Sheriff, Chambers and Stanforth, crying out, 'At the Cap,' 'At the Cap,' which was at that time on Chambers' head, and one of the persons endeavoured to ride over the said Sheriff, another of them would have ridden over the same Stanforth, and Master Walter Hastings gave fire at Chambers with one of the petronels, but the same did not discharge; so that they got to the said inn with much hazard, &c."

the Earl of Stamford rose upon them for the purpose, as they were dispersed in their several quarters.

Fresh Proclamations, both on the part of the King and the Parliament, followed as soon as intimation was received of the late proceedings. On the first of July the Houses passed a Declaration, intimating "that they thought it strange that his Majesty should be so misled by evil counsellors as to issue forth such a Commission as had lately appeared in Leicestershire, so contrary to the law and so full of danger to the subject." The King in reply issued a counter Declaration, dated July 4, to the effect that "whereas notwithstanding the Proclamations of May the 27th and June 20th to the contrary, he understood that certain ill-affected persons, under colour of an ordinance from Parliament, had forcibly seized part of the Magazines provided for the safety of the nation, and carried them to their houses, and moreover threatened and endeavoured to apprehend some of his subjects for obeying his Commission for endeavouring to suppress forces raised without his consent, he could not interpret this to be less than levying war against him, and therefore commanded all Sheriffs and Officers not to meddle with arms under pretence of ordinances made by one or both Houses, but to use their utmost endeavours, as in duty bound, for arresting and apprehending all such as should by force remove or retain any magazine or any arms of his trainbands, or arrest or apprehend any of his subjects under pretence of any ordinance concerning the Militia, and having apprehended them, to commit them to the common gaol of the County where they are seized, there to remain till delivered by due course of law." This Proclamation had been preceded by an express warrant to Henry Hastings to seize the person of the Earl of Stamford wherever he might find him. Hastings accordingly paid a second visit to Leicester at midnight, with a body of horse and foot, and after proclaiming the Earl a traitor, according to his warrant, summoned the Keepers of the Magazine, in which the arms lately removed appear to have been replaced, to surrender their charge, but was compelled to return without effecting his object. On the other hand, Hastings himself, in conjunction with Sir Richard Halford, Sir John Bale, and John Pate, was formally impeached for high treason by Sergeant Wild, at the bar of the House of Commons, and summoned to submit himself within a limited time to the au-

thority of the House; the Earl of Stamford was justified from the charge of treason, and the Judges were commanded to proclaim to all Grand Juries at the ensuing Assizes the decision of Parliament respecting the illegality of Commissions of Array. Rudyard, the Mayor, who was accused before the House of too ready a compliance with Hastings' demands, was also summoned to Westminster, and committed to prison, in which he remained several months.

By this time the King seems to have considered his actual presence necessary to re-establish his authority in a town in which the cause of the Parliament was evidently gaining ground daily. Accordingly, setting out from Beverley in Yorkshire, he arrived at Nottingham on the 21st of July, and the next day entered Leicester, where the Grand Jury of the County were assembled previous to the commencement of the Assizes. Clarendon informs us, that the Earl of Stamford, with the principal persons in the Parliamentary interests, on hearing of his approach, immediately fled to Northampton, but that the King's party setting out in pursuit, seized upon the person of Dr. Bastwick, so well known as the victim of Star Chamber tyranny, and carried him back as a prisoner to Leicester, where the King consulted Justice Reeve on the propriety of trying him forthwith for treason; and on being informed by that dignitary, that the case was one in which he dared not provoke the displeasure of the Parliament by interfering, ordered him at once to be conveyed to York. He also states that the arms of the Militia were resolutely refused to be yielded at the King's summons by a guard of twenty-five of the Earl of Stamford's adherents, who had barricaded themselves in the Magazine. But I regret to add, that the historian has on this occasion most irreverently termed that imposing relic of feudal grandeur, the East Gate of the Newark, in which the arms were deposited, "a small storehouse at the entrance of the town." By the Corporation accounts, it appears, that the sum of £50. was presented to Prince Charles on the King's entrance, and that the latter attended divine worship during his stay, in the Church of St. Martin, where his throne was publicly erected. His speech, delivered to the public authorities convened on his arrival, and which, from the elegant style in which it is worded, is not unlikely to have been a production of Lord Falkland's, is as follows:—

"Gentlemen,—Since I have found my presence so very accept-

able to my good subjects in these Northern parts, and that the errors and mistakes amongst them have wholly proceeded from misinformation, and are removed with more satisfaction and ease to them than they were received, I hold it a piece of my duty to take the utmost pains I can fully to inform and undeceive my people, and rather to prevent crimes than to punish them. In this errand I am come to you, among whom there hath not been the least misunderstanding, to show you that I do not suspect any malice in the place or in the people—though persons of an ill disposition have been busy in it and amongst you as in any County of England, and such who have taken as great pains to do mischief and bring confusion as good men should for peace and happiness, though 'tis true that very many worthy persons among you have appeared of contrary affections, which I shall always acknowledge. I am come to you at a time when nothing could invite me to such a journey but my affection to and good esteem of you; having sent such propositions for peace and accommodation to my two houses of Parliament, that I hope to have no other use of your affections but your prayers—being sure they will submit to them with alacrity, if the inexcusable enemies to the peace of the Kingdom be not strong enough to prevail; and then you will find yourselves so much concerned, for I have required nothing that with more justice can be denied me (if it be duly weighed) than my crown or my life may be taken from me, that I shall not need to ask your assistance. I know you will bring horse, men, money and hearts worthy of such a cause. Your religion, your liberties, your laws, which I will defend with my life, I mean the good known laws of the land, not ordinances without my consent, which till within these twelve months was never heard of, from the foundation of the Kingdom, will be the quarrel. And in such a cause, the taking away my towns, ships, arms, and money from me, shall not dishcarten me. The concurrence and affection of my people, with God's blessing, will supply and recover all."

Notwithstanding the conciliatory character of this address, the feeling of distrust at that time prevalent was too general, or the public discontent at the late unconstitutional exertion of the King's authority too recent, to allow of its producing much effect. The reply, on the part of the town, although respectfully worded, and acknowledging his Majesty's protestation for the defence of the Pro-

testant religion, is suspiciously silent upon some points of the King's speech, and indicative of any thing but satisfaction with regard to others. It expresses sorrow for his Majesty's long estrangement from his Parliament, states that justice can never be expected while delinquents, such as Mr. Henry Hastings, are protected against the justice of Parliament—enlarges, with some little exaggeration, upon the conduct of the latter—and concludes by praying that the Commission of Array may be recalled, and that the Magazine and Militia may be suffered to remain in the hands of the Earl of Stamford. We find that the answer was accompanied by a formal petition, signed by the whole of the Grand Inquest, who probably thought the collection of arms, in any place, a means exceedingly likely to bring on the calamities of open warfare—that the Magazine, instead of being suffered to remain in the hands of either party, might be broken up, and the arms distributed throughout the County to the several hundreds.

It seems natural to infer, that the King's advisers were, in this instance, not sorry to find a middle course open to them, by which they might escape the mortification of uselessly attempting that which they were unable to carry into effect, or of abandoning their demands by a silent acquiescence with the existing state of things. Lord Falkland was accordingly instructed by the King to express his willingness to comply with the petition of the Grand Inquest; and his letter on the subject, bearing the usual marks of refinement by which all the productions of that great and lamented character were distinguished, is thus worded:—

“ His Majesty hath graciously considered the petition, and commanded me to return this answer:—That as the petitioners have hitherto enjoyed the blessing of peace under his Majesty's government, so he hath never expressed a greater love of it, and a care to preserve it, than by his late bearing so many indignities to avoid all disturbance of it, the which he hopes will have that effect with his good subjects that they will henceforth have as great a regard to his honour as he hath to their peace; of which, if others were equally tender, no presage of blood or ruin would hang over their heads. For your Magazine, his Majesty hath never looked upon it under any other consideration than to preserve it for the County whose it is. And, therefore, upon complaint heretofore made to him, that some persons

have presumed, in a warlike manner, to levy it without any lawful authority, out of his good affection to this County, gave direction, to prevent future mischief, that it should be restored to the disposition of those to whom it belonged, and therefore well approves that it be disposed in such manner and such places as seems best and fittest to the County, in which his Majesty will not intermeddle. For the freeing and protecting the Keepers of the Magazine in their trust, his Majesty knows not of the meaning of the petition. If they have had a lawful trust committed to them, and done nothing in discharge and execution thereof but what is warrantable, they need no other protection but that of the laws; but if, in the violent and forcible removing of the Magazine, they have done any thing unjustifiable, his Majesty believes no trust boldly undertaken can excuse them, and therefore expects that this be immediately delivered to the Keepers to the disposal of the County without conditions.

“ FALKLAND.”

There is on record a receipt, signed by the Grand Jury, acknowledging, in consequence of the King's letter, the delivery into their hands of the County Magazine from the East Gate of the Newark, under the promise of distributing it throughout the hundreds—and a declaration, dated July 25, and signed by the whole of the Inquest, “ that whosoever should re-collect it should be judged, esteemed, reputed and taken to be an enemy to and public disturber of the public peace.” In this manner ended the controversy respecting the Magazine at Leicester, which, under all circumstances, must certainly be considered as one of the fullest and most distinct of the numerous auguries, portending the general convulsion on the point of taking place.

Most who are present are aware that on the 25th of August, 1642, war was openly commenced by the setting up of the King's standard at Nottingham. It may not, however, be so generally known, that Charles spent the morning of that very day at Leicester Abbey, then the residence of the Countess of Devon—from whence he set out for the purpose of being present at the ceremony; all the circumstances of which, apparently prognosticating the melancholy character and disastrous termination of the struggle into which he had plunged, have been so graphically described by Clarendon. Leicester, as well as the surrounding Counties, was not slow in

experiencing the change from a contest, as yet carried on principally by words, to a condition of actual hostilities. On the 26th of August, that is on the very day following, Prince Rupert and Colonel Hastings, at the head of the advanced guard of the royal cavalry, surprised the Earl of Stamford's house at Bradgate, from which they carried off a considerable quantity of arms and ammunition, after injuring his furniture, and offering various threats and insults to his household.^g The whole body of the King's horse was shortly afterwards pushed forward towards Leicester, preparatory to an advance to the southward, and on the 5th of September was established in and about Queneborough, which formed the head quarters of that division of the army. From this place a demand was forwarded by Prince Rupert to the Mayor of Leicester, which shows at what an early period of the war the rash and impetuous character of a leader, at all times careless of the extent to which he compromised the real interests of the cause for which he was in arms, provided the impulse of the moment were gratified, and whose imprudence both in and out of the field was one of the principal causes of the ruin of his master, began to display itself. This requisition is contained in a letter still existing among our ancient town archives, in which it forms far from the least interesting document, and is thus worded :—

“ Mr. Mayor,—His Majestie, being confident of your fidelity to do him all possible service, willed me this day to send for you to my quarters, and there to deliver to you his pleasure. But I, perceiving you are dissuaded from coming (by whom or on what pretences I know not), have here sent you his Majesty's demand. His Majesty being now somewhat necessitated by the vast expence he hath been this long time enforced to, for the safeguard of his royal person against the rebellious insurrection of the true malignant party, who are now too well known, and their irreligious intentions too plainly discovered by all his loving and obedient subjects, doth earnestly desire and require you and his good subjects of the city of Leicester, forthwith to furnish him with two thousand pounds sterling, which he with much care will take order to see repaid in convenient time, and that his Majesty's gracious promise, I hope, will

^g “ They have also,” adds the writer, who has recorded these outrages, “ disarmed many of the inhabitants thereof, and taken away many of their goods; but no doubt their account is at hand. *Amen, Lord.*”

seem much better security than the public faith, which is the usual assurance that the party which call themselves the Parliament do give. And you must trust them on it if you assist not his Majesty hereby to defend you against them. You must not go less than your former expressions have spoken you, which induced me not to doubt of receiving the demanded sum to-morrow, by ten of the clock in the forenoon, that I may be

. “ Your friend, RUPERT.

“ Queneborough, this 6th day of September, 1642.

“ P. S.—If any disaffected persons with you shall refuse themselves or persuade you to neglect the command, I shall to-morrow appear before your town in such a posture with horse, foot, and cannon, as shall make you know 'tis more safe to obey than to resist his Majesty's command.”

There is no doubt that on the receipt of this sufficiently intelligible epistle, the authorities of Leicester sent in all haste to Nottingham, to procure an exemption from the demand of the Royalists, since we have also a letter dated the 8th of September, under Charles' own hand, condemning the conduct of his nephew, and expressed in the following terms :—

“ To our trusty and well-beloved the Mayor and Aldermen of Leicester,—Trusty and well beloved, we greet you well. We have seen a warrant under our nephew Rupert's hand, requiring from you and other the inhabitants of Leicester, the loan of two thousand pounds, which as we do utterly disavowe and dislike, as being written without our privity or consent, so we doe hereby absolutely free and discharge you from yielding any obedience to the same, and by our own letters to our said nephew, we have written to him to revoke the same, as being an act very displeasing to us. We indeed gave him direction to disarm such persons there as appeared to be disaffected to our person and government, or the peace of this our kingdom, and should have taken it well from any of our subjects that would voluntarily assist us with the loan of armes or money; but it is so far from our heart or intention, by menaces, to compel any to it, as we abhor the thought of it; and of this truth our actions shall bear testimony. Given at our Court, at Nottingham, 8th September, 1642.”

This letter had, in all probability, the effect of preventing the

town from submitting to the full demand of the Royalists. Yet the object for which it was despatched was but partially accomplished, since before it had arrived, Prince Rupert had succeeded, either by threats or promises, in extracting from the town authorities the sum of five hundred pounds. For this the Corporation are yet in possession of his formal receipt^h and acknowledgment; but I need scarcely add, that no document has hitherto been discovered which gives evidence that any steps were ever taken for the re-payment of the sum.

Although the Royal and Parliamentary armies were now sufficiently near each other to make the general opinion plausible, that one of the Midland Counties would be the scene of their first encounter, this expectation was disappointed by the subsequent movements of the hostile forces. Rupert, after establishing his head-quarters at Leicester, was shortly afterwards summoned, with the whole of his cavalry, to rejoin the King, who proceeded by slow marches towards Derby, and from thence to Shrewsbury, to countenance the levies making in his favour in the West of England—while the Earl of Essex, who was stationed at Northampton as Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Parliament, pursued his way towards Worcester. The battle of Edgehill followed, in which Colonel Hastings greatly distinguished himself at the head of his regiment of horse; and after this event, as it is well known, the King's army advancing as far as Brentford, and being repulsed in a severe action close to the town, retired to Oxford, where it was distributed in winter quarters. By this time, and chiefly by the efforts of the famous Lord Brook (killed early in the following year, by a shot from the tower of Lichfield Cathedral, while assaulting the Close in that City), an Association was set on foot between the Counties of Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Buckingham and Bedford. A Committee of twenty-one members, consisting of Thomas Lord Grey of Groby,ⁱ Sir Edward Hartop, John St. John, William

^h The receipt is thus expressed:—"Sept. 7, 1642. Receyved by me, Prince Rupert, Prince Palatine of the Rhine, and Generall of all his Majestyes Cavallerie in this present Expedition, the full sum of ffive hundred pounds for his Majestyes use, of the Mayor, Bayliffes, and Burgesses of the Borough of Leicester, to be repayed againe by his Majestye. I say receyued ffive hundred pounds."

"RUPERT."

ⁱ Eldest son of the Earl of Stamford, appointed on the 13th of December, 1642,

Roberts, Peters Temple, William Jervase, Thomas Haselrig, and others, together with Richard Ludlam, the Mayor of Leicester, was appointed by the Commons to levy men, horse, arms, and ammunition for the use of the Parliament; several of their number being also included in a Commission, issued on the first of April, 1643, for sequestering the estates of notorious delinquents; an office which they appear to have executed with all diligence. About the month of January in this year, Belvoir Castle, the seat of the Earl of Rutland,* was seized and fortified for the King, by Sir Jervase Lucas, who had just raised a regiment of cavalry at his own expence, and who was aided in his enterprize by Baptist Noel, Viscount Campden, and Mr. Mason, Rector of Ashwell. Newark-upon-Trent, a post of the utmost importance to prevent communications between the troops of the Parliament under the Earl of Manchester at Lincoln, and those acting with Fairfax in Yorkshire, was soon afterwards secured by the Royalists, and entrusted to Sir Richard Byron. Wiverton, a manor house in Nottingham, belonging to the Lord Chaworth, was also occupied by the Cavaliers,

Lord-General for the Parliament, of Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Rutland, and Lincoln; and on the 15th of the same month, Major-General, under the Earl of Essex, of the Associated Midland Counties.

† The Earl of Stamford, petitioning the Parliament in October, 1643, states that he has been employed for the space of eleven months as General of the Western forces, Colonel of a foot regiment, &c. without having from that time received any moneys for the said engagements; and having had his house plundered, all his horse and cattle driven away, his tenants so plundered that they are no more capable of paying their rents, he humbly requests that some care may be taken for satisfying of arrears, *and that some malignant's house that was ready furnished might be allotted unto him for his family,*

* John Manners, eighth Earl of Rutland, born at Aylestone, June 10, 1604, died at Haddon, September 29, 1679. This nobleman was a strenuous supporter of the cause of the Parliament. On the 16th of October, 1643, he signed the solemn League and Covenant, at Westminster, and was one of the twenty-two Peers who remained to represent the House of Lords in London, after the greater number had joined the King at Oxford. He is also mentioned by Clarendon as having been nominated as one of the Commissioners appointed to take charge of the new Great Seal, made to replace that Council by the Chancellor, Sir Edward Littleton, in his flight to York. In this office, however, he declined to serve. He at one time incurred the displeasure of the Parliament, by the singular offence of having his child signed with the Cross in the ceremony of baptism, and in that spirit of persecution from which neither Royalists nor Republicans were in those days exempt, was committed to the custody of the Serjeant of Arms, by order of the House.

and the chain of strongholds furnishing the means of communicating through the Midland Counties to the King's forces in the North and West, completed by the establishment of Colonel Hastings at Ashby-de-la-Zoueh, with a garrison subsequently increased to seven or eight hundred men. The latter occurrence is thus noticed by Clarendon:—

“ After the King had settled at Oxford, Colonel Hastings with a troop of horse only, which he easily gathered, went with a commission into Leicestershire of Colonel-General of that County, and fixed himself at Ashby-de-la-Zoueh, the house of the Earl of Huntingdon his father then living, which he presently fortified, and in a very short time, by interest there, raised so good a party of horse and foot, that he maintained many skirmishes with the Lord Grey; the King's service being more advanced there by the notable animosities between the two families of Huntingdon and Stamford, between which the County was divided passionately enough without any other quarrel. And now the sons fought the public quarrel with their private spirit and indignation. But the King had the advantage in his champion, the Lord Grey being a young man of no eminent parts, and only backed by credit and authority of Parliament; whereas Colonel Hastings, though a younger brother, by personal reputation had supported his family, and by the interest of it and the affection the people bore him, brought no doubt an addition of power to the King's cause. Insomuch that he not only defended himself in Leicester, but disquieted Sir John Gell in Derby, and fixed some convenient garrisons in Staffordshire.”

The officer thus eulogised by Clarendon, who for his constant and unwearied efforts in the King's service was afterwards created Lord Loughborough, by a patent dated October 29, 1643, and who is most severely handled in many of the Parliamentary dispatches of the time, in which he is frequently designated as “ that notable thief and robber,” seems, so far as zeal towards the cause he had adopted could deserve it, fully to have earned the commendation bestowed upon him by the royal historian. As a vigilant and daring partizan leader, he was probably unrivalled by any individual holding a commission under the King; but there is every reason to believe, that much of that unbridled license and violence which generally disgraces desultory warfare, and which was at all times

conspicuous among the royal troops, was at least allowed, if not openly encouraged in the force acting in obedience to his commands. We are informed that the device upon his ensign, during the Civil War, consisted of an arch masoned proper, constituting a burning oven or fiery furnace proper, upon a field gules, with the motto "QUASI IGNIS CONFLATORIS;"¹ and this ferocious cognizance, if not merited before, must at least be allowed to have been well earned during his stay at Ashby, by the injuries inflicted, by his direction, upon the neighbouring country. To guard in some measure against his plundering excursions, which were sometimes carried to the very walls of Leicester, and were a constant source of annoyance and alarm to its inhabitants, garrisons were established by Lord Grey at Bagworth, and in Leicester Abbey;^m in addition to which, the people of the neighbouring villages were furnished with arms and ammunition (and of the latter a regular manufacture is recorded to have been carried on in the town)ⁿ to defend themselves in their churches upon any sudden emergency. A strong outpost was also stationed at Thurnby, as some protection against the parties of horse which were constantly issuing from Newark and

¹ The devices upon the ensigns of the principal leaders of the Royalists and Parliamentarians in Leicestershire, have been extracted by Nicholls, from Prestwich's *Republica*:—"The Earl of Stamford's banner was, azure, in three lines—the two first in Roman capitals, the last in Italian letters, all of gold, namely, 'FOR RELIGION,'—'KING AND COUNTRY,'—'A MA PUISSANCE,'—fringed argent and azure. Lord Grey, of Groby, bore per pale azure and gules, over which, in fess, the Sun in its glory; in it a left eye sable—on the Sun an Unicorn, ermine, armed or, fringed with argent and gules. Another standard of the same nobleman represented a Committee of the House of Commons, with the motto, 'PER PACEM ET BELLUM.' The banner of the Royalists, at Belvoir, was blue and gold, with the inscription, 'UT REX SIT REX.'"

^m This fact is established by an entry in the *Journal of the House of Lords*, dated July 20, 1643:—"Upon information to the House of Lords, that the house of the Countess of Devon, at Leicester, shall be pulled down, if she do not pay to the garrison 150*l.* a week, which is put into it, the House ordered that the Committee at Leicester shall take care that no violence or plundering shall be offered to the said house of the Countess of Devon, but that the said house and goods, notwithstanding any such order, shall be preserved from spoil and ruin. And the Speaker was directed to write to the Lord-General, to acquaint him with their Lordships' orders, and to send to the Lord Grey, to preserve the house from violence and plundering."

ⁿ According to Throsby, in the Old Town Hall, which he states to have then stood in Blue Boar Lane.

Belvoir; and another at Kirby Bellers, the seat of Sir Erasmus de la Fountayne. The sum expended weekly upon the maintenance of these several Parliamentary garrisons in the County, amounted to no less than £600 weekly, besides the general contribution of £147. 10s at which it was at first rated, and which was afterwards increased by an additional monthly assessment of £250, by order of the House of Commons, on the 16th of January, 1645.^o

During the year 1643, (the year, it will be remembered, distinguished by the battles of Stratton, Lansdowne, Roundway Down, Chalgrave Field, and Newbury,) the County of Leicestershire, although not the scene of any remarkable military achievement, was not without its share in the contest then raging in almost every part of the kingdom. On the advance of the Earl of Essex to the relief of Gloucester, he was met at Aylesbury by the Lord Grey of Groby, at the head of the forces of the associated Counties, under his command; and no doubt greatly aided, by their assistance, in frustrating the attempts made by the cavalry of the Royalists to impede his progress, as well as in accomplishing the main object of his expedition; but I cannot discover whether the Leicestershire troops were engaged in the first battle of Newbury, delivered by the Royalists, for the purpose of intercepting Essex on his return to London. On the 27th of November, the Committee of Leicestershire sustained the temporary loss of three of its members: Arthur Staveland, Thomas Haselrig, and Captain Fras. Hacker,^p who were surprised and made prisoners at Melton Mowbray, in a bold and sudden attempt upon the town, undertaken by a body of horse from Belvoir Castle, united with a party detached for the purpose from the garrison of Newark, by Sir Richard Byron. Above three hundred common soldiers, and several officers, are said to have fallen into the hands of the Royalists on this occasion. On the 24th of December, however, the fortune of the two parties was reversed by a severe defeat,

^o Other assessments seem to have been occasionally imposed for the support of the army in Ireland, for payment of the Scots on their advance into England, &c. &c.

^p Of the family of Hacker of Colston Bassett, near Owthorpe, in Nottingham; afterwards executed for commanding the guard stationed in the High Court of Justice at the trial of Charles I., and signing the warrant for his execution. His brother, whom the Royalists have accused him of threatening to pistol for his opposite principles, bore arms in the King's service. The prisoners above mentioned seem to have been afterwards exchanged.

given, as a writer on the side of the Commonwealth records, "to the Belvoir and Newark cormorants," by Col. Wayte, commander of the Parliamentary garrison at Burley House, in Rutlandshire. This event, no doubt, materially contributed to the ensuing siege of Newark, which, after a short investment, was soon afterwards undertaken in form by a combined force from Derby and Leicestershire, under Sir John Gell^a and the Lord Grey, which had united at Melton Mowbray with a body of the Earl of Manchester's foot, despatched from Lincoln under the command of Sir John Meldrum; and on the 6th of February, 1644, the fortified posts established by Col. Hastings, at King's Mills and Wilney Ferry, were forced by the Leicester and Derby troops. Two important passes over the Trent were thus placed in the hands of the Parliamentary commanders; and Newark, being blockaded on all sides, and exposed to a series of fierce and vigorous assaults, was, notwithstanding the resolute defence of its garrison, speedily reduced to extremities.

While the efforts of the Militia of the Associated Counties were chiefly employed in this direction, Col. Hastings, who from his strong hold at Ashby-de-la-Zouch had closely watched their late proceedings, probably imagining that the garrison of Leicester was too much weakened by the absence of the force detached towards Newark to afford any effectual opposition to his movements, seized, with his accustomed activity, the opportunity of sweeping the open country with his cavalry, although without any satisfactory result,

^a High Sheriff of the County of Derby, at an early period of the dispute between the King and Parliament a zealous and violent royalist, and afterwards as eager a republican. His name and exploits are constantly occurring in Whitlocke; but he is principally famous for the engagement between his forces and those of the Earl of Northampton, near Stafford, in which that nobleman was defeated and slain. Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson however, after a most unfavourable account of his general character observes, of this exploit, "some that knew him well said he was not valiant, though his men once held him up among a stand of pikes, while they obtained a glorious victory in which the Earl of Northampton was slain; certain it is he was never by his good will in a fight, but either by chance or necessity; and that which made his courage the more questionable was, the care he took, and the expense he was at, to get it weekly mentioned in the diurnals, so that when they had nothing else to renown him for, they once put in that the troops of that valiant Commander Sir John Gell took a dragoon with a plush doublet!" In the year 1650 he was tried, with Colonel Eusebius Andrews, before the High Court of Justice for misprision of treason, and narrowly escaped with his life. See Whitlocke in ann.

since on the 4th of March, 1644, one of his parties was surprised at Hinckley, by Lieut.-Colonel Henry Grey, and driven out of the town with considerable loss.

In Whitlocke's Memorials we find the following entry without date, no doubt alluding to this successful attempt:—"The Clergy and others being summoned to take the Covenant, and many coming in, Col. Hastings, with four hundred of the King's horse, roamed about the country, took a hundred of those coming to take the Covenant, and drove the rest home. Upon this, two hundred horse, sent from Leicester unexpectedly, fell upon their quarters, rescued all the prisoners, and took 50 men, with 150 horse and arms." The details of the skirmish, however, are found more circumstantially as well as somewhat differently given in two letters; the one forwarded by Lieut.-Col. Henry Grey to Lord Grey, who at the time appears to have been in London, having left Sir Edward Hartop in command of the Leicester troops lying before Newark, and the other from an inhabitant of Leicester, name unknown—both read before the House of Commons, and afterwards published as usual in the form of pamphlets, by their authority. As the action to which they relate was one of the most spirited enterprises undertaken by the party of the Parliament, in this County, during the wars, I shall take the liberty of submitting the contents of these two documents to your notice. The letter to Lord Grey is thus magniloquently introduced:—

"A letter to the Lord Grey of Groby, wherein is declared a great victory gained by the Parliament forces, near Hinckley, where they have slain Captain Mainwaring, and twelve common soldiers; taken prisoners, Lieut. Grey, brother to Lord Grey's Cornet, Lieut. Rawlings, Quarter-Master Dickens, Col. Nevil's trumpeter with a silver trumpet, 44 common soldiers, surprised many armes, 130 horse, 80 heads of cattle, divers packs of ammunition, and received two ministers and 30 countrymen, which the enemy had taken prisoners:

"Right Honourable,

"Upon Sunday night, about eleven o'clock, I received advertisement from Captain Bodle, that the enemy passed Niel Fen with 350 horse, and advanced towards Lutterworth, with a purpose to sweep the whole country. Upon Monday I drew forth Major Bingley and Capt. Hacker's troops, and Capt. Bodle's troops, to go

and fight with them, hearing they were at Sutton ; but missing them there, I marched to Hinckley, fearing they would quarter there that night. I came to Hinckley about seven o'clock, where I found all passage into the town blocked up. About half a mile from the town, I took one of their scouts, who affirmed them to be 300 horse and 50 dragoons, and that they had been in their quarters two hours. I entered the town at the end towards Barwell, first causing my dragoons to light by the hills, where I left their horses with a small guard, and caused my dragoons to advance with the forlorn hope of 30 horse, commanded by Captain Fitzgaret, to force the passage ; which, after some resistance, was effected. Myself, with the small body I had, (120) charged up to the Cross, where I found the enemy in a body, and after a quarter of an hour's fight, we beat them out of the town. Being in the field, they rallied again, and were advancing to charge us, whereupon I drew up my dragoons and caused them to advance with my horse into the field, where, after some shots made, the enemy gave way. Then I charged them again with my horse, which they stood not to receive, but wheeled off and fled. I pursued them above half a mile, but being in the night and in a dirty country, I thought it not safe to pursue them any further, knowing they were as many more as I had. There were slain of the enemy, one Captain Mainwaring, of common soldiers about twelve ; but I am confident there were many wounded, for I hear that there were some went into the houses, and died by the way. I have prisoners, Licut. Grey (your Lordship's cornet's brother), Licut. Rawlings, Quarter-Master Dickens, one trumpeter, with his silver trumpet, four and forty common soldiers, a great many arms, which I gave most upon Capt. Bodle for his troop of dragoons. We took above 150 horses, 80 cattle, and divers packs, with some ammunition. I released two ministers, prisoners, and thirty countrymen, taken from Cosby and Leir—the horse and cattle being most taken from our friends, and were most restored, some little satisfaction being made the soldiers ; this was done with 120 horse, and 50 musketeers of my cousin Grey's company ; his Lieutenant is a very brave man, whom your Lordship must needs think of. The enemy, by my cousin Grey's account, were 300 ; being three troops that came out of Newark, two of Lichfield, one of the Lord Loughborough's, one from Tissington, and one from Wiverton, be-

sides dragoons—the trumpet saith 60, my cousin acknowledgeth 20. The glory I wholly ascribe unto God of this action; I acknowledge it was his hand and not ours that defeated the enemy; for certainly had they stood it when they were got into a body in the field, we should have had the worst of it. My Lord, I hope in my next to send your Lordship good news from Newark. In the mean time, I am, Right Honourable, your most faithful Servant,

“ HENRY GREY.”

“ Leicester, March 6, 1644.”

The second letter to which I have alluded is to this effect:—

“ March 11. General Hastings hath had great loss of men in Leicestershire, as appears by a letter from those parts dated March 5, in these words:—Yesterday at night, Hastings’s men were abroad at a town in our County called Hinckley, and had brought in thither 26 honest countrymen from several towns, intending to carry them to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and had also taken about fourscore kine, oxen and horses, from the country people. They likewise took a minister named Mr. Warner, whom they much abused and threatened to hang him. All their prisoners they put into the Church, and in a jeering manner asked them, ‘Where are the round-heads, your brethren at Leicester—why come they not to redeem you?’ But the intelligence of these things coming to our town of Leicester, all our horse having gone to Newarke, we were faine, every private townsman, to spare his own horse, and to send away some 120 of our foot soldiers, and some thirty troopers that lie at Bagworth House, to keep it from the enemy, under the command of Col. Grey, whom the Lord Grey hath made Governor of Leicester. These our forces, being upon their march to Hinckley, took the enemies scouts without much resistance, entered the town, killed one of the enemies captains, named Mainwaring, and four or five more of their soldiers, and wounded nine of them very sore—took two of their lieutenants, one quarter-master, one ensign, forty-five prisoners, and one hundred horses—released all the countrymen, rescued the cattel, and restored them to the right owners, and came home with victory and booty the next day, being Shrove Tuesday. None of our men were slain there, only four of them were wounded, whereof one was casually hurt by Colonel Grey, because he forgot

our word, which was ‘ God prosper us,’ the enemies word being, ‘ For the King.’ Our men went on very courageously, and if they had not been too greedy of prey, they had near taken them all. The enemies forces were to the number of 300, and ours about 150. This morning we heard from Newark-upon-Trent, the besiegers whereof sent us word that they had taken an outwork, and one drake. We expect every hour to hear from them.”

Shortly after this transaction, the siege of Newark was raised by Prince Rupert, who had been sent by the King, from Oxford, for the especial purpose. A division of the Parliament’s army, which had been stationed beneath the walls of the place, commanded by Sir Edw. Hartop, aided by the Lord Grey’s regiment from Leicester, having taken a position on the news of his approach at Cote’s Bridge, near Loughborough, had a slight skirmish with the advanced guard of the Royalists, in an attempt to defend the passage;^r but after a few cannon shots and certain demonstrations which seemed to promise a more serious encounter, were compelled, on information of the vicinity of the main body under the guidance of Rupert in person, to fall back towards Leicester, and leave the road to Newark open. After the relief of this important garrison, one of the effects of which was the enabling Col. Hastings to re-establish parties of his men in the posts of which they had been lately dispossessed, and the increase of the Marquis of Newcastle’s forces in the north, Leicester appears, not without reason, to have entertained serious apprehensions of a siege. The result of the battle of Marston Moor, however, dissipated all anxieties on this head; and among other advantages which they obtained by that signal victory, the Parliamentarians were left free to form the siege of Newark anew. Sir John Gell and his coadjutor, Lord Grey, at the same time turned their attention to the reduction of various garrisons held by the opposite party in their vicinity. Wilney Ferry was wrested a second time

^r Thus related by Mrs. Hutchinson.—“When Sir Edward came into Leicestershire the whole county rose with him, and the Governor of Leicester sent out foot and cannon to assist him. His forlorn hope, being of the Nottingham horse, charged the enemy’s forlorn hope and routed them, and then fell into their body of foot, which they had drained out of their little garrisons, and routed them also, and if Sir Edward Hartop would have come on with his body they had all been cut off; but the knight would not stir, but commanded the forlorn hope to retreat, who had slain and taken many prisoners.”

from the cavaliers, the besiegers adopting the singular expedient of making their approaches under shelter of several waggons filled with hay, to which, after they had advanced within a short distance of the works, they set fire, and commencing the assault while their enemies were half blinded by the dense volumes of smoke, which drifting in that direction before the wind, speedily filled the entrenchments, compelled the commander of the garrison, Captain Robinson, to surrender at discretion, with the whole of his men. Wingfield Manor, in Derbyshire, was next invested, and after a short but obstinate resistance on the part of its defenders, delivered up on articles, August 23, 1644. In numerous skirmishes, more or less important, between the Leicester and Ashby cavalry, during the latter part of this summer, the Parliamentarians appear for the most part to have had the advantage. On the first of July, several parties of horse, lying about Belvoir and Ashby, were attacked and dispersed by Lord Grey, who made above forty privates and several officers prisoners. On the 10th of August, Col. Hastings, having entered the village of Belgrave, for the purpose of plundering a party of carriers, was driven back with the loss of six of his men, and of all the booty they had acquired; and a subsequent attempt on the part of the Royalists to intercept a convoy protected by 80 Leicester troopers near Castock, proved still more unfortunate, since although they had lined the hedges, between which their adversaries were obliged to pass, with their musketeers, they were driven from their position by a furious charge and compelled to disperse, leaving eight of their number slain, and sixty prisoners. In October, it is stated, that "a party of Colonel Hastings' horse, having come to Loughborough on the Lord's day, according to their usual profanation of the Sabbath, rode into the Church at sermon-time, and would have taken away the preacher, but the women rescued him, and proved more valiant than either their husbands or Hastings' men." Although we may be allowed to be a little sceptical respecting the latter statement, it is certain that these repeated incursions determined the Committee, in the month of November, strongly to fortify and garrison the Lord Beaumont's^s house, at Coleorton, as

^s Sapeote Viscount Beaumont, distinguished for his exertions in favour of the King's cause, in support of which his property and estates were almost wholly sacrificed. Up to this period the village of Coleorton, the greater part of which

an additional station for their troops—a step which brought on numerous petty encounters, but had the effect of compelling the cavalry of Col. Hastings to keep more close within their quarters for some time afterwards. Nor were the Parliamentarians always contented with remaining on the defensive in this position against their active opponents, as is proved by the following extract from a contemporary authority, Dec. 31, 1644: “The Leicester forces at Coleorton got in very well, and have lately performed a good piece of service at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where, entering the town, they beat the enemy into the tower, Hastings’ strong hold, took divers papers, and many arms.”

In the month of February, 1645, Leicestershire was the scene of two more serious conflicts than had yet taken place within the limits of the County. Sir Marmaduke Langdale having been sent forward at the head of 2500 cavalry, to throw supplies into Newark-on-Trent, found his way obstructed, between Leicester and Harborough, by 800 dragoons, in the service of the Parliament, who with a resolution much more commendable than their discretion, having quitted a wood which they had occupied, offered him battle in the open field. As might have been expected, they were, in consequence, totally overthrown and routed, after a determined resistance, with severe loss;^t and the victors pursuing their march, are recorded (although but on slight authority) to have slept the same night at Leicester; a circumstance which, if true, says little for the strength of the town at the time. On their further advance northward, they were met on a plain near Melton Mowbray, by Colonel Rossiter, commanding a force of 3000 horse and dragoons, and one of the most furious and well disputed cavalry engagements in the whole war ensued. The cavaliers having had time to cover their flanks with their baggage waggons, were able to sustain without yielding the repeated charges of the somewhat superior numbers of the enemy, who at length drew off and suffered them to continue their march without further molestation to Belvoir, after a loss on both sides of 300 killed and wounded, including several officers.^u

was burnt to the ground, or laid in ruins, in the numerous skirmishes which took place about and within it, appears to have been held as an outpost by the Royalists at Ashby.

^t 100 killed, 250 prisoners.

^u Among the slain on the side of the Royalists are mentioned Col. Tuke, Major

Immediately after this engagement, Captain Hacker, commanding the Parliamentary garrison lately established in the manor of Sir Erasmus de la Fountayne, at Kirby Bellers, who had been present on the field with Colonel Rossiter, having retreated to his post and endeavoured to blow up the house, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy, made the best of his way to Leicester, which he reached the same night. No attempt, however, was made by the Royalists to establish themselves in the place; which the Committee soon afterwards, on learning the direction the enemy had taken, re-garrisoned without difficulty. At Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the garrison of the Castle, as soon as they were made acquainted with the issue of the late engagement, relying upon its probable impression upon the minds of their antagonists, made a vigorous effort to repossess themselves of Colcorton, but were compelled once more to retreat into their fortress, after a skirmish in which more than sixty of their men were made prisoners by the Parliamentarians. Although such occurrences as these are for the most part considered beneath the dignity of general History, they constitute to us data of exceeding importance towards a more accurate estimate of the real amount of misery inflicted by a state of warfare wherever it exists; since it is a melancholy but indisputable fact, that the recorded carnage of pitched battles will almost invariably be found to fall short of the loss of human life inflicted in the desultory and less imposing conflicts, by which such events are preceded or followed. During the whole of the period, over the leading events of which I have cursorily passed, the County seems to have been reduced to a condition of extreme misery, if we may form an opinion from the words of more than one petition presented to Parliament, in which the strongest terms are employed to describe the sufferings sustained by its inhabitants; and there is but too much reason to imagine, from the circumstances in operation to produce them, that the calamities complained of were in no instance either feigned or exaggerated.^v

In order fully to understand the causes of the event to which

Kertlington, and Captain Markham. The Parliamentarians lost no person of note.

^v See more particularly on this subject a Petition of the "Gentlemen Freeholders, and best affected of Leicestershire," praying that the Lord Grey might be sent down to them; presented by Thomas Beaumont, Esq. to the House of Commons, Nov. 6, 1644, and transcribed by Nichols in the Appendix to his History.

Leicester owes the principal celebrity it has acquired in connection with the great Civil War, a few words in explanation of the relative positions of the contending parties in the early part of the year 1645, may not be unnecessary. It will be remembered, then, that the Parliament having re-modelled their army and passed their celebrated self-denying ordinance, by which Fairfax was placed at the head of their forces, with the subsequent addition of Cromwell as his assistant and adviser for the ensuing campaign, had directed that General to use every means to possess himself of Oxford, and that the King, on the other hand, having with singular indiscretion, and as it afterwards appeared, almost to his utter destruction, despatched Colonel Goring into the West, to assist Prince Maurice in the reduction of Taunton, resolved with the rest of his army to march to the relief of Chester. Before reaching the place, he was met by Sir John Byron, who informed him that the Parliamentarians had raised the siege; and it was therefore determined to draw Fairfax, if possible, from his design upon Oxford, by attempting the reduction of some garrison in the hands of the Parliament, and of equal importance to that party. Leicester was accordingly selected as the fittest place for accomplishing this object. No town in the kingdom was at the time worse provided with means for maintaining a protracted defence. A few weeks before, Colonel Hastings had been encouraged by the weakness of its condition to form a secret design against it, which, but for the timely discovery of the plot, and the arrest of certain persons concerned in it, would, in all probability, have proved successful. With the exception of the Newark, which had lately begun to be fortified in earnest, and which is described as then "comprising a circuit of waste ground, the Castle hall, * a fair and spacious Church, and a vast cellar by the Castle, as well as an hospital, and many fair buildings, orchards, barns and stables," the entire line of defence which had been begun about a year before, by directions from Lord Grey, and which consisted of little more than a simple embankment, protected by a graffe or fosse, and strengthened at a few important points, as the Belgrave and Goltre gates, with horn works, was still in an unfinished condition. This and much more is intimated in a letter to the Lord Grey, from Colonel

* The greater part of the Castle, being in a ruinous state, had been demolished in the year 1633, by an order from the Crown directed to W. Heyrick, Esq.

George Booth, who thus writes from Leicester on the 12th of April, 1645.

“ My Lord,—Being arrived at this place, which by reason of your public and private interest in it, lays claim to your utmost endeavours for the preservation of it, I shall make bold to acquaint your lordship with the weak condition it is in—most obvious to the observing eye. By all men’s account, there are not above 200 soldiers in the town; and these as peremptory against discipline, as their governors are ignorant of it. I am most confident—nay, would almost hazard my life and fortunes upon it, that 500 resolute soldiers would at any time make themselves masters of this town, which, if lost, will take away all commerce with the North-east of England. And I can assure you, ’tis God’s providence alone in keeping it from the enemy’s knowledge, and suppressing their courage, that is this town’s defence; but when we neglect to serve God in his providence by secondary means, ’tis just with God to leave us with our own strength, which is but weakness. The grand masters, most sensible of their danger, and careful of their own security, have all of them houses in a place of this town called the Newark, where they are fortifying themselves as strong as may be, which will prove, as I fear, of most dangerous consequences; for I perceive the townsmen much discontented, conceiving themselves deserted by the Committee to the enemy’s mercy. I assure you, my Lord, I espy discontent dispersing itself fast abroad in this town; and if your Lordship’s care prevent not, I expect very shortly to hear ill news from this place. Pardon my boldness, excuse my haste, and accept of my profession of being, my Lord,

“ Your Lordship’s most obedient servant,

“ GEO. BOOTH.”

The charges contained in this letter, which seems to have produced an immediate remonstrance from the Committee of both Kingdoms, transmitted through Lord Grey, were thus answered by the Committee of Leicester, on the first of May, 1645:—

“ Right Honourable—

“ We received your Lordship’s letter of the 25th of April last, about our fortifications, wherein we shall submit ourselves to your

Lordship's discretion. We never had the least thought to desert the town or any part of it, but have fortified and still proceed to fortify all our outworks, and have much amended them; and never had further thoughts in fortifying the Newark than for a resource in time of absolute necessity, and as more safety for our magazine, it being a place very easily made a very strong place. Our greatest want is of ordnance and arms, and therefore we humbly desire your Lordships, that they may be speedily sent us by the bearer, Commissioner Blunt, and that he may have your Lordships' warrants to charge carts, waggons, and horses, for bringing the same hither, giving reasonable payment for it. We take leave and are my Lords,

“ Your Lordships' most humble servants,

“ THOMAS HASLERIGGE, EDMUND CRADOCK,

“ JOHN BROWNE, VALENTINE GOODMAN,

“ FRAN. SMALLEY, JOHN SWINFEN.”

“ WILL. STANLEY,

In consequence of the correspondence just cited, the line of defence round Leicester was at length put into a more respectable state. But the scale on which it had been traced was quite enough to render it ineffectual, since it is stated to have been no less than three miles in compass, in compliance with a wish on the part of the Committee to embrace certain scattered buildings within it, which ought rather to have been pulled down. It is also asserted, that several buildings were left standing near the works, which were likely to afford a shelter to an advancing enemy; among which are particularly mentioned, “ Master Chapman's houses, near Belgrave Gate, Green's houses near Humberstone Gate, the Widow Swan's houses and the Grange near to the South Gate, divers houses near West Bridge, and many near to St. Sunday's bridge, all within six score paces of the works, and most within pistol shot.” One Master Wadland, clerk to the Corporation, is also unenviably immortalised in our town annals as having refused to allow that part of the wall of the Newark to be fortified which lay close to a piece of land in his possession—the same spot, probably, at which the great breach was afterwards effected. There is little doubt that the principal officers of the King's Army were made fully acquainted with these unfavourable particulars, and determined to avail them-

selves of them accordingly. Their design, however, was discovered some time before it was attempted to be carried into execution, in a somewhat singular manner. The pamphlet entitled "The Narration of the Siege and Taking of Leicester," states, that about the 15th of May, the Committee at Leicester hearing that there was one Henry Purcfoy at Belgrave had spoken of a design against the town, sent a party of horse to fetch him in, and that on being examined, he confessed that he had been a Lieutenant in the King's army, and that being at Bristol, and coming early in the morning into the Governor the Lord Hawley's chamber, the chamber being matted, and the Governor himself in bed and the curtains drawn, he heard the said Lord tell O'Neale, his bed-fellow, that he was upon a gallant design last night for the taking of Leicester, and that the gentry and town's-people had invited him. The Committee were unable to procure any further information, but what they had already heard seems at once to have acted as a sufficient stimulus to induce them to redouble their exertions to make up for their past negligence. The first step was to summon a hall, at which the Mayor and Aldermen, as well as the whole body of the Common Council, took a solemn oath, that they had not entered into any correspondence with the enemy, nor offered to assist them with arms or ammunition. They next set about making immediate preparation to meet the threatened danger. The tradesmen of the town were ordered to shut up their shops, and the Mayor to make out a list of those capable of bearing arms, who were found in all to amount to about 900 men. Fresh works were directed to be thrown up at the Friars and the Horse Fair Leas, where the main guard appears to have been established, and the fortification of the Newark to be finished in all haste. The exact quantity of ammunition in the place was also endeavoured to be ascertained, and the result of the enquiry was the discovery, that about one hundred barrels of powder, and match in proportion, were at the disposal of the Committee. Letters were at the same time sent to the Parliamentary Committee of both Kingdoms, requesting leave to raise one thousand fresh recruits, as well as to the neighbouring towns of Northampton, Coventry, Nottingham, and Derby; to Colonel Rossiter, and lastly to Cromwell, earnestly entreating additional supplies of arms and men. Most of these missives were unsuccessful. From the different towns to

which application was made, and from which reinforcements at least to the amount of five hundred men had been confidently expected, not a single recruit was obtained. Cromwell, we find, stated in reply to the Committee, that he was unable to assist them, since he had just been ordered from following the King's army to join Fairfax before Oxford; but that he had left Col. Vermuyden with a body of horse to watch his motions, and desired that all future communications might be made to that officer. From the Committee of both Kingdoms in London, leave to make a fresh levy by enlistment was easily obtained, and three pieces of ordnance* were ordered to be sent down forthwith, to add to the means of defending the town. Sir Arthur Haselrig, who had been requested to purchase two hundred muskets for the use of the garrison, was unable to execute his commission, but sent 70 or 80 carbines instead. But the greatest difficulty under which the Committee laboured (the want of sufficient troops to occupy the works) still remained, since the enlistment went on but slowly, the country around "being," as they describe it, "very malignant, and many coming in who did not intend to fight." The whole force mustered on the occasion, including the regular troops who might now, by recent additions to the garrison, amount to seven hundred, does not seem to have much exceeded sixteen hundred men.† These however

* Six pieces of cannon and 1000 muskets had been previously sent from London to Leicester, April 15, 1643. The Committee assert, that those last ordered did not reach their destination until too late to be of service.

† The garrison of the town, distributed under the several heads mentioned by the Committee in their printed account, may be thus reckoned:—

Regular Cavalry,.....	240
Infantry,	480
Inhabitants capable of bearing arms,.....	900
Recruits from the Country,.....	150
To these are to be added,	
Dragoons under Major Innes,.....	200
Cavalry recalled from Kirby Bellers,.....	100
Total,	<u>2070</u>

That the estimate of the Committee is tolerably correct is proved to a certain extent by a note of Simmonds upon the same subject, who thus speaks of Leicester, while enumerating the posts held by the contending parties in the county:—

were subsequently increased by two hundred dragoons under Major Innes, who, being quartered at Humberstone on his way to Nottingham, was repeatedly urged to assist the Committee with the force which he commanded; and although he at first refused to comply with the request, was at last persuaded to throw himself into the town, at the very moment when the advance of the Royal cavalry appeared before it. The services of Col. Sir Robert Pye, who being on his way to join Col. Vermuyden, was stopped at Leicester, by the information that all the roads in the direction in which he had intended to travel, were beset by the enemy's horse, were obtained by a similar application; and we are informed that his compliance was rewarded by the immediate present of twenty gold pieces. Both these officers were appointed to assist Colonel Theophilus Grey, the Governor, and Lieut.-Col. Whitbrooke, the latter a soldier of considerable experience, who had seen service in the Low Countries, and had been recommended to the Committee by the Earl of Pembroke.

In the midst of these preparations intelligence was received that the King's army had marched from Stone in Staffordshire, on Monday the 26th of May. The Committee forthwith proceeded to call in a hundred cavalry from Kirby Bellers, and were in expectation that their garrison at Coleorton would also retire into the town. As, from the rapid advance of the royalists, however, it was impossible to bring off their cannon, this force, amounting to 350 men, acting upon their own responsibility, determined to stay behind, and the Committee were in consequence deprived of their aid during the ensuing siege. Coleorton was summoned on the 27th, by Col. Hastings, or as he should rather be termed, by virtue of his recent patent of nobility, Lord Loughborough, who had united part of his cavalry with that of the King, but a direct defiance was returned to the demand; and although, according to Simmonds, a quarter-master in the royal army, Charles passed through the town on the day after, he seems to have considered the expedition on which he was intent, of too much consequence to admit of delay

"Leicester, Col. Theophilus Grey, third brother to the Earl of Kent, writes Governor, 600 men." In mentioning the strength of the several Royal and Parliamentary garrisons, the writer of the curious document referred to of course takes notice of the regular soldiery alone.

from any attempt to reduce a post comparatively unimportant. The garrison at Coleorton were in consequence encouraged to venture on a sally upon the rear of the royal forces, in which, according to one account, they succeeded in inflicting a loss of 40 men upon the enemy before they were repulsed.

On Wednesday the 28th, the King, who, as we learn from Simmonds' Notes, had spent the previous night at the Castle of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, passing through Coleorton, as before noticed, and continuing his march by the Abbey of Gracedieu, the seat of Sir Thomas Beaumont, advanced as far as Cotes, where he fixed his head quarters at the house of Sir Henry Skipwith.² A considerable portion of his army, however, had reached Loughborough on the 27th, and quartered themselves in the town and the surrounding villages, while an advanced guard of 2000 horse pushing forward almost to the walls of Leicester, gave the first indication to its inhabitants, that their recent apprehensions of the hostile designs of the royalists were well founded. To oppose these, Captain Babington drew out the cavalry of the garrison, which he arrayed under the protection of the cannon of the place, being subsequently joined, while awaiting the attack of the enemy in this position, by Major Innes, at the head of two hundred dragoons in the service of the Parliament. The latter officer, who had on the same day drawn his men together at Humberstone with the intention of pursuing his march to Nottingham as already mentioned, but who had been induced by frequent messages and expresses from Leicester to alter his intention, having at great risk of being intercepted by the royalists made his way into the town, proceeded at once to the assistance of the Leicester horse. With this reinforcement, a skirmish was for a short time maintained, although attended with little loss to either side,^a and towards evening the

² The marches of the main body of Charles for a few days before the siege of Leicester, are given by Simmonds as follows :

“ Thursday, May 22, from Drayton to Stone, Co. Stafford.

Saturday, 24, from Stone to Uttoxeter, (king at Eaton, Derbyshire.)

Sunday, 25, to Burton-upon-Trent.

Tuesday, 27, to Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Wednesday, 28, to Loughborough, (king at Cotes.)

Thursday, 29, to Leicester.”

^a Two killed and a few wounded of the party of the Parliamentarians.

more advanced parties of the parliamentarians having been safely withdrawn by their respective commanders into the town, hostilities were suspended for the night. Notwithstanding the intimation just received of the vicinity of the king's army, it was not yet considered certain that the recent movements of its advanced guard were to be considered as any thing more serious than an attempt to cover a march in a different direction, and that Newark-upon-Trent was not, as there seemed some ground for believing, the real point upon which Charles was directing his route; but if any such expectations were formed in the minds of the people of Leicester, they were disappointed early on the morning of the 28th, by the appearance of Sir Marmaduke Langdale at the head of the whole force of the royal cavalry, with which, after announcing his approach by setting fire to three windmills and one water-mill within sight of the walls, he proceeded formally to invest the place, while numerous parties detached for the purpose, riding up close to the lines, endeavoured to ascertain the weakest parts of the defences, and the most favourable places for making their approaches. The cavalry under Major Innes and Captain Babington, upon this again issuing forth, by the command of Sir Robert Pye, drove in the advanced picquets of the enemy upon the main body by a vigorous attack, and in a second skirmish, which took place in the afternoon, a detachment of the royalists was charged by a party of horse under Lieut. Davis, and pursued as far as the bridge of Belgrave. During these encounters, in which several prisoners were made on both sides, and by which the besiegers were prevented from preparing their batteries during the whole of the day, shots were continually exchanged between the artillery of the town^b and that which accompanied the investing force; and a desultory fire, both of cannon

^b The few pieces of cannon at this time in Leicester being insufficient to defend the whole line, were shifted from one point to another, as the demonstrations of the Royalists appeared to require their removal. Sir Robert Pye and Major Innes, in their account of the siege, make heavy complaints against the Committee for neglecting to provide the horses necessary for this service, as well as for omitting to supply spades, mattocks, &c., for repairing the breaches, and cannon and musket baskets (or gabions) for the protection of the soldiers employed in working the guns, the lines being, according to their representation, for want of such defences, entirely naked and exposed to the fire of the enemy. With what justice this charge was made, it is of course now impossible to determine.

and small arms, was continued at intervals during the whole night, especially from the South Centry, since the enemy were plainly perceived to be beginning to plant a battery before the South bridge, against the defences in that quarter.^c

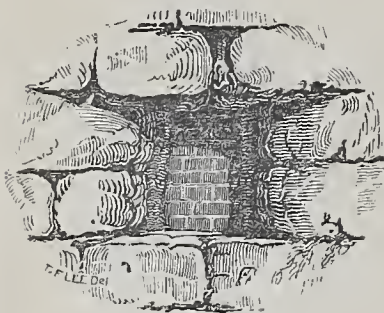
On the following day, Thursday, the 29th of May, the main body of the Royal infantry was seen to approach Leicester in three divisions, and in the afternoon, the King himself, attended by Prince Rupert, took up his head quarters in the village of Aylestone. In the mean time, the besieging army being so stationed as to face the town in various directions, particularly at St. Sunday's and the South bridges, the horse of both sides were again engaged in one or two trifling encounters, during which the royalists were employed in bringing down their cannon towards the walls, and pointing them against some of the least protected parts of the fortifications, the places most open to attack being, as the Committee assert, pointed out to the besiegers by some of the town's-men of the opposite party, who had escaped into the camp of the enemy.^d Simultaneously with these hostile movements, a number of the King's troops endeavoured to make a lodgment in some of the houses near the foot of St. Sunday's bridge, and adjoining the old church-yard of St. Leonard's; but they were after a short contest beaten from their post by a body of volunteers, principally consisting of dismounted cavalry, who sallied over the bridge for the purpose; and after having effected their object, set fire to the buildings which had afforded a temporary shelter to the assail-

^c This statement is given on the authority of the Committee. Major Innes, in his "more exact Relation," makes no mention of the battery in question having been begun until the evening of the 29th.

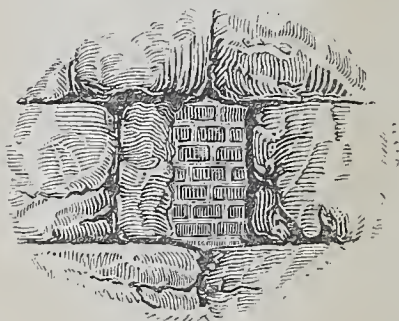
^d Sufficient evidence, besides the statement of the Committee, might be adduced to prove that the fire of the artillery of the royalists, in addition to being directed against those portions of the wall of the Newark battered in breach, was spread along a great extent of the southern and perhaps eastern defences. Mention is made in the Corporation accounts for the year of the sum of "£3. 3s. paid to sundry workmen for taking down divers houses near the South gate." These buildings both Nichols and Throsby conjecture to have been much damaged during the siege. In the "Walk through Leicester," a work I believe written by Miss Watts, it is stated, that in removing the Old East Gates several balls of a large size were found in the massy woodwork forming part of the structure. The army of Charles however could scarcely have had more than fifteen or sixteen pieces of cannon at most, mounted at the same time against Leicester.

ants.^e St. Leonard's Church, there is every reason to believe, was either totally destroyed, or left in the condition of a mere ruin, by this necessary conflagration. As it was now imagined that the principal efforts of the besiegers would be devoted to forcing an entrance into the town, at the quarter of the Newark, the utmost exertions were made to add as much as possible to its strength, the boundary wall on the south side having probably been already pierced with the embrasures for musketry and artillery,^f of which several may be still observed in that part of it which remains standing.

INTERIOR.



EXTERIOR.



The whole extent of the fortifications was at the same time divided into two parts. The Newark, which, as the quarter most endangered, was furnished with the greatest number of defenders, was assigned to Sir Robert Pye and Major Innes. The Captains Babington and Hacker were appointed to command at the West Bridge. The remainder of the defences, comprising St. Margaret's Church-yard, which is spoken of as a strong post, and the Belgrave and Goltre Gates, each of which has been mentioned as protected by an advanced horn-work, were entrusted to Colonel Grey and Lieut.-Colonel Whitbrooke.

During the ensuing night, throughout the whole of which the garrison were kept constantly on the alert by repeated alarms on the

^e The merit of this exploit is claimed respectively by the Committee in behalf of their soldiery, and by Major Innes for his dragoons.

^f The Committee speak this day of continuing a breastwork already begun within the Newark—perhaps the interior line of defence behind the South wall, completed on the day following under the cannon of the royalists.

Emma Watson & on stone 17th C. wall



St. Peter's, Leno, Georgetown, London

part of the besiegers, the royalists continued to labour vigorously at their battery opposite the South bridge, although a heavy fire of musketry and cannon was directed against the spot by the garrison, who had observed on the previous evening numerous parties of the enemy beginning to work in earnest, for the purpose of covering themselves, in this direction. Notwithstanding all efforts to impede its progress, the battery was entirely completed and armed before daybreak with the heavy guns for which it had been prepared; and on the following morning, (May 30,) Rupert, as Commander-in-Chief of the Royal army, after the ceremony of discharging two heavy pieces of ordnance from this spot against the walls, despatched a trumpeter into the town, offering pardon to the Mayor and Burgesses, and free leave to Major Innes to withdraw with his cavalry, on condition of an immediate surrender. In the Council of War, which was convened on the receipt of this summons, considerable difference is represented to have arisen. Sir Robert Pye and Major Innes are described as having advised a prompt compliance with the Prince's offer, and it cannot be doubted that they were fully justified in their counsel, by the improbability of so small a garrison maintaining a place, which was defended at the part chiefly menaced by little more than a stone wall, against a force, the cavalry of which alone amounted, according to Simmonds, who has enumerated the regiments of which it

⁵ Subjoined is the list of the Royal horse present at the siege of Leicester, as given by Simmonds in his Diary :—

“ The King's Life Guard, consisting of two troops, the King's and Queen's.

His Highness Prince Rupert's Life Guard of Horse, commanded by Sir Robert Crane.

His Highness Prince Maurice's Life Guard, the horse consisting of about 100 gentlemen and reformadoes, commanded by the Lord Molineux.

Prince Rupert's Regiment of Horse, consisting of 400, eight troops, commanded by Sir Thomas Dalyson.

Lieut.-Col. Wm. Legge, now Governor of Oxford.

Lord Loughborough's Regiment of Blue Coats, three troops, 100.

Col. Horatio Cary's regiment, not 200 independent.

The body of horse was divided into four brigades, two southern and two northern horse.

James, Earl of Northampton, consisting of these four regiments :—

Queen's Regiment, commanded by Sir John Campfield, 150.

Prince Maurice's Regiment, commanded by Lieut.-Col. Guy Molesworth.

Earl of Northampton's own Regiment, 250.

was composed in detail, to nearly 6000 men. The Committee, on the other hand, headed by Colonel Grey and the Captains Babington and Haeker, warmly advocated, as they affirm, a more resolute if not a more prudent line of conduct; one among them commencing the delivery of his opinion, in favour of defending the town,

Sir William Vaughan's Regiment, (it was Sir Thomas Lucas' in Ireland) consisting of seven troops, 400 in all.

Col. Thos. Howard's brigade, consisting of these seven regiments:—

Col. Sam. Sandy's, of Worcestershire, Governor of Worcester, consisting of 150.

Col. Thos. Howard, 80.

Col. Leveson, Governor of Dudley Castle, 150.

Col. Bagot, Governor of Lichfield, 200.

Sir Robert Byron, 100.

Sir Henry Bard, Governor of Campden House, 100, commanded by Barker.

Col. Worthe's, (were Col. Marrowes' first) 100.

Total of this brigade, 880.

Major General Sir Marmaduke Langdale's Brigade, divided into three divisions.

Sir William Blackstone's Brigade, and so is the northern horse divided into two brigades. Total 1,500.

Sir Richard Wylles' Horse from Newark, 1,200.

Summa Totalis of the whole army of horse:—

King's and Queen's troops,	130
Prince Rupert's,.....	140
Prince Maurice's,	120
Prince Rupert's Regiment of horse,	400
Lord Loughborough's,	100
Col. Cary's,.....	200
Earl of Northampton's brigade,.....	850
Col. Howard's brigade ,.....	880
Sir Marmaduke Langdale's and Sir William Blackstone's brigade,	1500
Sir Richard Wellys's,	1290
	<hr/>
	5520 "

The Infantry of the royal army, on the 9th of May, are thus enumerated:—

King's Life Guards,	200
Bard's Regiment,	300
Col. Lisle's foot,	500
Prince Rupert's,	1000
Lord Astley's,	3300
	<hr/>
	5300

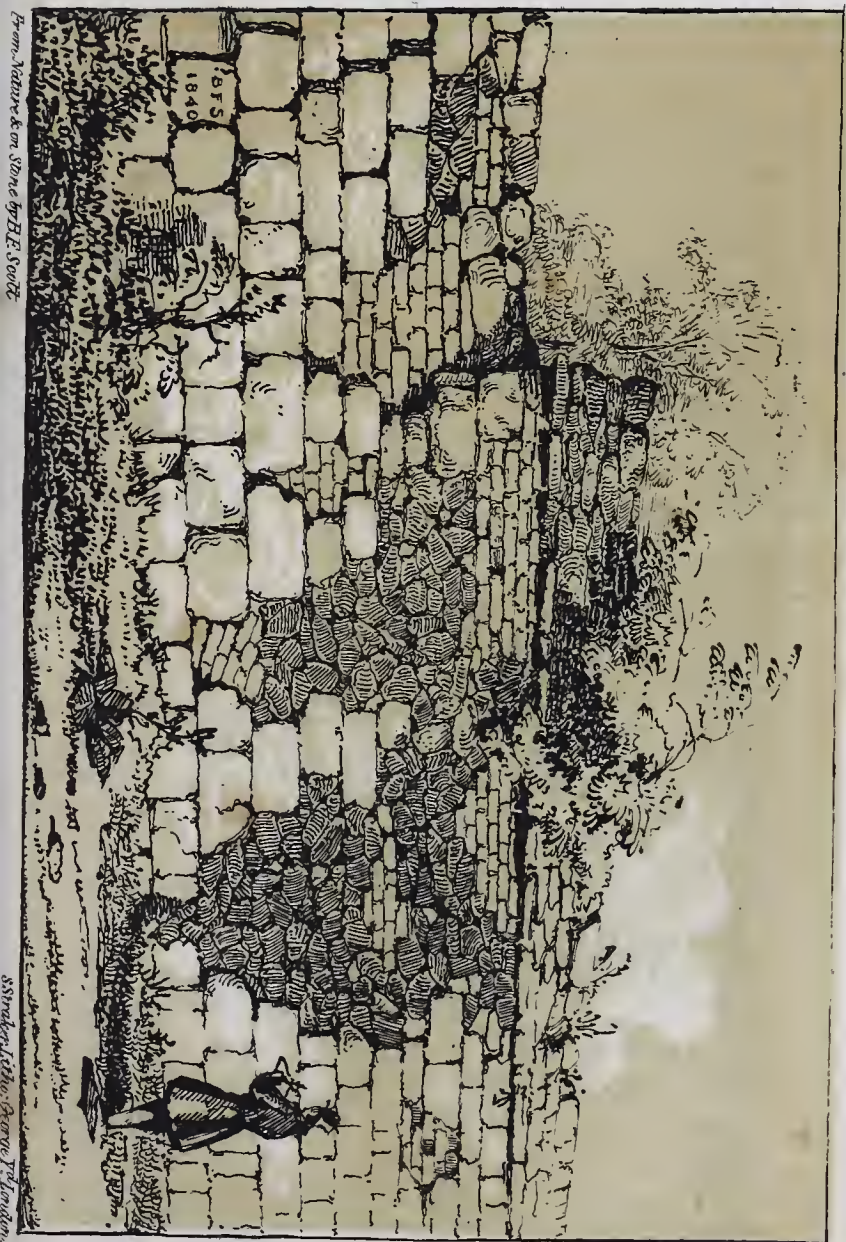
This estimate closely agrees with that of Major Innes, who in his relation reckons the besieging force at about 10,000 men.

with the words, "We are part of those who have undertaken the Parliament's cause—a cause so high as I desire to die in no other." As is usual in such cases, a middle resolution was adopted. The Prince's trumpeter was detained and a messenger despatched from the town in his stead, requesting time to consider his proposal until the next morning, the Committee designing to make the most of the interval, if allowed them, by adding to the strength of the Newark. In the mean time Rupert had been employed in preparing a second battery within six hundred yards of the South-gate, for the purpose of more effectually breaching the wall of the Newark, preparatory to a general assault in the event of his summons proving unsuccessful. The position of this battery, which from the clearest evidence appears to have been situated upon the spot indicated in the accompanying plan, and somewhat north-west of the site of the present Infirmary, was, like that finished the night before, chosen with sufficient judgment, since the king's troops might thus be moved up within a reasonable distance of the point of attack, protected by the embankments of the Raw-dykes, and by the general inequalities of the ground, from the artillery of the town.^h From hence the Prince, either offended (as it has

^h The words of Simmonds are, "In the interim the Prince raised a battery for six great pieces upon a hill where sometimes of old had been such another." By this hill Nichols asserts that the Raw-dykes are intended. The statement requires some modification. If by the Raw-dykes are to be understood such remains of these remarkable works as both Camden and Stukely affirm to have been situated in their time about half a mile from the town, and which once extended continuously, as represented in the plan of the latter, for nearly 700 yards to their western extremity near Aylestone toll-gate, the distance from the Newark wall (not to mention other objections) is very far beyond the effective range even of the long muskets used in the time of Charles the First, within which all accounts agree in representing the batteries of the besiegers to have been raised. But it is far from improbable that the elevation near the present House of Correction, which has been for some time and is yet in the process of being levelled, formed at the time of the siege a detached portion of the embankments in question, vestiges of which, as I have been led to believe by highly respectable authority, were to be seen some years since as near the town as the space between Oxford Street and the Welford Road. On the plan exhibited at the public delivery of the above lecture, the Raw-dykes, in consequence of a statement by Mr. Bickerstaff cited by Nichols, but which is believed to be a misquotation from Camden, were represented as existing in a perfect condition much nearer the South side of the town than subsequent inquiries appear to justify.

been affirmed) by the style of the letter in which he was simply called "the Commander of his Majesty's army," or else suspecting the real object of the demand, sent back the messenger—after threatening to arrest him if he returned with a similar request—and insisting upon a reply to his former proposal within a quarter of an hour. The Committee, notwithstanding, resolved upon a second demand of further time; and the same envoy having been employed upon the errand, he was committed to the custody of his Marshal by Rupert, who about three o'clock in the afternoon, gave orders for commencing a furious cannonade and fire of musketry against the town. Meanwhile, a hall had been summoned by the Mayor (William Billers), for the purpose of ascertaining the feeling of the town's-people, as to the propriety of continuing their defence. At this assembly but two of the Common Council had delivered their opinion, and both for holding out at all hazards against the King's forces, when the debate was suddenly cut short by the sound of the ordnance of the besiegers. The meeting was therefore instantly broken up, and all present commanded to hasten to their posts; part of the Committee repairing to a house in the Market-place, to receive information and to issue orders, and others to the lines to distribute money among the soldiers, and encourage them to a determined resistance.

The stone wall of the Newark, although one of the guns of the Royalists was speedily dismounted and the gunner slain by a cannon shot from the town, did not, as might be expected, long withstand the artillery directed against it; and within three hours, being laid in ruins to a considerable extent by the fire of at least six pieces of ordnance, playing upon it without intermission, afforded a practicable breach of considerable width to the assailants. There can be no doubt whatever that the wall thus battered was the same lately leading to Swan's Mill, of which by far the greater part has recently been taken down, but of which a few yards yet remain, and I hope will long remain, as one of the most interesting monuments of the Civil War in existence, and most distinctly inscribed with the characters of the violence to which it was at that time exposed. In this the embrasures, through which the defenders of the Newark delivered their fire, are yet almost as perfect as at the time



From *Nature & on Stone* by H.E. Scott



when they were first made, while at one end, where almost the whole of the stone-work has been destroyed to the foundation, the wall has been curiously rebuilt, not only with bricks and rubbish of every description, but with great quantities of the bones of oxen and other animals, forming it is to be supposed the readiest materials at hand, at the time of its hurried re-erection by the royalists. Nor, if it is a point of any interest to fix upon the exact place at which the principal breach was effected, can this be a matter attended with the least difficulty,ⁱ since many must remember that although showing in nearly every part partial interruptions of the courses of the ancient Dane Hill stone by patches of brick-work and forest granite, the South Newark wall, in one quarter in particular, besides being much reduced in height, had lost for several yards every appearance of regularity of structure. But the most convincing evidence as to the precise locality of the principal point of assault, is to be found in the fact that cannon shot of a large size have been discovered in that portion of the northern wall of the Newark, lying behind the extremity of Trinity Hospital, and precisely opposite the part of the south wall most damaged, which, having either entirely missed or but slightly grazed the breach, had lodged themselves in the boundary on the other side.^k It may be added, for the information of the curious in the more minute points of antiquity, that in one angle of the same wall may yet be observed a number of holes evidently made by iron shot of small diameter, which having been discharged either from the guns of the batteries,

ⁱ The opinion that the Royalists assaulted the town at a breach, in which what was once called the "second Magazine," or "Rupert's tower" was included, is of course erroneous. At the same time there is every reason for believing the tradition that this building was greatly injured and the adjoining gateway demolished during the siege. Standing at no great distance from Rupert's battery, (a circumstance from which it probably derived its name) and being a post from which the besiegers were exceedingly likely to be annoyed by the musketry of their opponents, it no doubt attracted a full share of their fire; but that almost the strongest part of the Newark should have been attempted, while a much easier entrance presented itself in its vicinity, is no less contrary to reason, than to the evidence mentioned above, that the assailants directed their chief efforts elsewhere.

^k The cannon shots mentioned vary from seven to twelve pounds in weight. The former is about the weight of ball thrown from the ancient demi-culverins. Half of a bar-shot, weighing six pounds, has also been discovered, and musket balls are still sometimes dug up in the adjacent garden, now in the occupation of Mr. Cowell.

or, as is less probable, from field pieces moved up towards the breach at the time of the assault, were driven deeply into the soft and friable sandstone of which the wall in question is composed.¹

While the royalists were actively engaged in levelling as much of the defences opposite their guns as might appear necessary to ensure a passage into the interior of the Newark, the parties entrusted to maintain it had not been idle, having been busily employed as well in returning without intermission the fire of the enemy with their musketry and artillery, as in throwing up what Simmonds calls "a handsome retrenchment," or breast-work, within four or five yards of the wall, composed of many waggon loads of woolpacks and other materials brought hastily together, and in this labour the women of Leicester are recorded to have taken their share with the most fearless resolution, altogether regardless of the shot flying about them, or the still greater danger from the fragments which were continually struck from the stones in their vicinity. For six hours after the breach had been considered practicable, the firing was continued uninterruptedly on both sides, the royalists being employed almost the whole of this time in making the necessary preparations for a general assault, which had been determined upon by a council of war; and at midnight, all arrangements having been at length completed, the commencement of the threatened storm was announced by a discharge of the whole of the artillery of the besiegers at the same moment. For this purpose the king's army seems to have been thus disposed. Colonel Leslie with his *tertia*, (perhaps the third part of a brigade) and probably with additional aid under other officers, was directed to commence the attack upon the great breach in the Newark. That upon the lines to the North of the town, and in the neighbourhood of St. Margaret's Church, was assigned to Sir Bernard Astley. Col. Sir Henry Bard was directed to carry the hornwork before the Belgrave-gate

¹ Many of the shots referred to, which appear to have been fired within point blank range, have entered the stones at a considerable angle; and as two different faces of the wall are equally marked by them, the existence of two separate batteries is clearly established. By following the lines of fire indicated in this manner, additional evidence is gained as to the exact position of the breaching guns of the besiegers. All the features of the spot which thus vividly gives evidence of a strife from which we are separated by a period of nearly two centuries, will be found well to repay the trouble of a personal inspection.



with his division of infantry; but the name of the officer under whose conduct the Goltre-gate was assaulted is not specified. The regiment of Prince Rupert, headed by Col. John Russell, appears to have been stationed against the works near the Horse Fair Leas. But besides these principal attacks, others were made under inferior leaders, in various directions; no less than twenty bodies of one or two hundred men being described as advancing towards the lines at the same time. Behind the whole, the royal cavalry were drawn up within musket shot of the works, in order to support the infantry at their entrance, or to check any sally which might unexpectedly be made from the place.

The defenders of the town, who, as the evening drew on, had been warned of the tempest gathering against them, by observing considerable bodics of the enemy without engaged in cutting down bushes in order to make fascines for filling up the fosse, were fully prepared to meet it. At the great breach in particular, one of their largest pieces of ordnance, which had been drawn thither from the Horse Fair Leas for the purpose of protecting the spot,^m and loaded with case shot, was served with such effect at the first burst of the assault, that those engaged in it were compelled to fall back in the utmost confusion. A second attempt was shortly afterwards made, (the cavalry stationed behind them beating on the discomfited infantry towards the walls, according to the fashion of the times) which at first appeared to be attended with a more favourable result, since the musketeers upon the breach, terrified by the vigorous onset of the enemy, dispersed at their approach, and suffered them to establish themselves for a few moments upon the ruins of the wall which they had been entrusted to defend. But the royalists, who had previously been galled by a discharge of artillery, on pushing forward as far as the trench before the inner breastwork, of the existence of which they were not previously aware, were furiously attacked by the horse stationed at its extremities under Captain Hacker, and the dismounted dragoons of Major Innes, and again borne back over the breach with the loss of several of their number. Notwithstanding this repulse, they were,

^m According to Simmonds (an eye-witness) the breach was defended by three pieces of artillery.

by the exertions of their leaders, speedily rallied afresh and re-conducted to the encounter; and no less than five determined attempts in all are said to have been made in the course of the night by the royal infantry, who were at length strengthened by the king's own guards, sent by Charles himselfⁿ expressly to their assistance, to carry the town in this quarter at the pike's point, each of which was baffled by the steady resolution of the parliamentarians, the opposite parties being several times so closely engaged, that many of their weapons and two stand of colours were wrested from the hands of their antagonists by the soldiers of the garrison. Among the slain at the Newark breach the royalists had to lament the loss of one of their bravest officers, Col. St. George, who, venturing upon a loaded gun with desperate valour, was almost shattered to pieces by its discharge, and fell literally at the cannon's mouth. On the other hand, the hardihood of a German dragoon has been particularly commemorated, who, when the principal gunner at the breach had been killed, voluntarily dismounted to take his place, and continued to work his piece with the utmost intrepidity, until he was transfixed beside it by the thrust of a pike. When it is considered that this obstinate resistance was maintained by men nearly worn out by watching for two nights previously, as well as by constant and laborious exertions during the preceding day, many of whom moreover had been without refreshment or relief for four and twenty hours, it must be acknowledged that the defence of the Newark fort, as it is called, by the soldiers of the parliament, is not unworthy of being reckoned among the most striking instances of the stern and enduring courage, for which that party was during the Civil War remarkable, and of which the well-known sieges of Bristol, Gloucester, and Taunton afford so many parallel examples.

While the breach at the Newark was the scene of this fierce contention, the attacks on other parts of the fortifications were attended with results more favourable, although the first efforts of the royalists, who attempted them in different parts by escalade, were repulsed with severe loss to the assailants. Major Bunnington, an officer of Prince Rupert's firelocks, was shot through the head as he

ⁿ Throsby speaks of a tradition current in his time, that Charles was stationed upon the Raw-dykes during the continuance of the several attacks upon Leicester.

From John Van Meter's sketch.



Sketch by John Van Meter.

reached the top of the ladder, and at the hornwork protecting the Belgrave-gate, Col. Bard, who led on his own division of infantry, having been struck down with the butt end of a musket, and sixteen slain in addition to sixty wounded of the party of two hundred and fifty, who endeavoured to enter at this point, the rest were compelled to retire. On their next approach, however, such a quantity of hand grenades was poured into the work, that the defenders, after many of them had been severely scorched and otherwise wounded, were forced to abandon it and allow a free entrance to the royalists, who on possessing themselves of the post, immediately let down the drawbridge, and gave admission to the Earl of Northampton's horse, for the purpose of scouring the whole line. Clarendon has recorded that the first among the royalists who made his way into Leicester was Col. Page, at the head of a dismounted regiment of cavalry armed with their swords and pistols, who had but that morning arrived from Newark. His account is not, so far as I have been able to discover, corroborated by any contemporary writer who has described the siege, but if the historian is correct, it is not improbable that the hornwork before the Goltre-gate was the post carried by the body of cavaliers of which he has made mention. It is certain that this part of the defences, as well as that assaulted by Col. Russel, was won nearly at the same time and in the same manner as the Belgrave-gate, while almost simultaneously with the success of the besiegers on the eastern side of the town, the division under Sir Bernard Astley, having stormed the North Mills,^o and planted three ladders against the works between St. Margaret's and the Belgrave-gate, began to throng into the town in that direction also. Col. Grey having hastened with part of the cavalry of the garrison to check the further progress of the enemy, after being severely injured by two sword cuts in the face and a pike wound in the back, was taken prisoner by Major Trollope, and his whole party routed and dispersed. By half-past one the defenders were driven from every part of their fortifications except the Newark, the black ensign of Prince Rupert hoisted upon the main battery, which I apprehend must have been at the Horse-fair Leas,

^o Apparently a post of some importance. The Committee at least, in one of their accounts, mention their having sent a heavy piece of ordnance thither from the High Cross.

and Leicester might fairly be considered in the hands of the king's forces. But a second and scarcely less serious conflict still remained. The soldiers and town's-people having retired to the Market-place,^p continued to maintain it for nearly an hour longer, and the ground in its neighbourhood appears to have been won almost step by step by the royalists, who were much annoyed by the fire kept up from the windows of the adjacent houses, and the stones and tiles hurled from the roofs. In continuing this kind of defence, the fairer sex again made themselves conspicuous by their resolution. At least a letter written by an officer in the king's army sets forth, "that the very women, to the honour of the Leicester ladies if they like it, officiously did their parts, and after the town was taken, and when if they had been possessed of any discretion with their zeal, they would have kept their houses and been quiet, they fired upon our men out of their windows, and from the tops of their houses, and threw tiles upon their heads." The neighbouring Church and Churchyard of St. Martin are also mentioned by the same authority, as occupied by a party of the garrison, who persisted in maintaining a strenuous resistance for some time after the fire from most other points had been silenced. This post seems however to have been at length carried by assault,^q after establishing themselves in which, the royalists had to sustain a last charge of cavalry, either headed by Major Innes, who by his own account had left his post at the Newark for the purpose of conducting it, or by Captain Babington, with the force stationed under his direction at the West Bridge. By whomsoever the attack was led, the king's horse were driven back by it from the neighbourhood of the South-gate to the Market-place, but on their being rallied there under the protection of their infantry, and one or two pieces of cannon which had by this time been advanced thus far into the town, the parliamentarians were compelled to retreat in their turn, and the victors having pursued their advantage as far as the Newark, the whole

^p The spot marked in the most ancient plan of Leicester as "Wednesday's Market," in High Cross Street, at that time open to St. Martin's Churchyard, by the fire from which it was consequently commanded.

^q Throsby gives the following entry from the parish accounts of the year: "Paid Francis Motley for mending the locks of the Church-doors broke by the King's army, 3s."

body of those stationed to defend it, to the number of six hundred men, finding themselves threatened with an attack on all sides, and conceiving further opposition to be hopeless, consented to lay down their arms and surrender themselves as prisoners of war, on condition of personal safety and exemption from being plundered. By daybreak the town had entirely ceased to resist, and too much of the licentiousness and violence commonly perpetrated on such occasions followed; although it would be contrary to the authority of most contemporary writers, to affirm, that the advantage gained by the successful party was disgraced to any great extent by wanton bloodshed after the victory had been fully determined; and with the appalling atrocities of the troops of Cromwell at Wexford and Drogheda before our eyes, it becomes us to speak guardedly of the behaviour of the armies of Charles the First while under similar excitement.

The royalists themselves indeed are unable to deny, that at their first entrance into the town, quarter was mercilessly refused to all encountered by their infuriated troops, without respect to sex; and it is a fact not attempted to be questioned, that one house in the Market-place, from which seven or eight dragoons had been killed, was broken open and every living being found within it put to the sword. The Scots, moreover, found in the ranks of the garrison, are affirmed to have been especial objects of dislike; and there may possibly be a certain degree of truth in the statement, that some among them who had been made prisoners were afterwards slain in quarrels purposely excited by the victors, to afford an excuse for thus basely gratifying their resentment. At the same time the most respectable authorities among their adversaries agree in asserting, that after the first heat of the assault was over, all who threw down their arms and surrendered themselves were freely admitted to quarter; and Whitlocke, perhaps the most candid writer of his time, has been at the pains of expressly contradicting some of the particulars in the earliest report which reached London, that the kennels of Leicester ran with the blood of its inhabitants; that all the Scots in the town were massacred in cold blood, and that the royalists had hung without form of trial several members of the Parliamentary Committee who had fallen into their hands.^r Yet if

^r "I find some of the pamphlets speaking of the horrid cruelty of the insulting

the king's adherents did not on this occasion imitate the worst features in the conduct of Count Tilly's soldiers at Magdeburg, or those of the Constable of Bourbon at the sacking of Rome, there is no doubt that their outrages against the property of the town's-people and garrison were carried to the utmost possible extent, and that the grant of their lives constituted the full amount of favour shown them by the insolent soldiery. "The conquerors," says Clarendon, "pursued their advantages with the usual license of rapine and plunder, and miserably sacked the whole town, without any distinction of persons or places. Churches and hospitals, as well as the houses, were made a prey to the greedy soldiers, to the exceeding regret of the king." Thus far the royal historian, a sufficient commentary upon whose statement is to be found among Simmonds' notes in the assertion, that before day had fully opened there was scarcely a single cottage in the place unplundered. It is recorded that no less than a hundred and forty waggon loads of goods, constituting the most valuable spoils of Leicester, were afterwards sent off to Newark-upon-Trent; and besides the destruction to a great extent of the town records and the loss for a

enemy putting man, woman and child to the sword. I know their tender mercies are cruelties; but (give the Devil his due) there were indeed many slain at the first entrance, and some that made little resistance, and some women and children amongst the multitude, by the rabble of common soldiers, but I cannot learn of any such order given to destroy all, as is said by some."—*Perfect Relation of the taking of Leicester*, 1645. Mr. Godwin, in his "History of the Commonwealth," has given without qualification the most unfavourable version of the conduct of the officers of Charles the First at the sacking of Leicester. "The town," he writes, "was given up to all the horrors of a place taken by storm, aggravated by the licentiousness that then prevailed among the king's forces." Yet the same historian has neglected to mention the disgraceful circumstance recorded, and seemingly with satisfaction, by the parliamentarians themselves, that at the battle of Naseby a few days afterwards, the conquerors either remorselessly massacred or frightfully disfigured with their swords, from three to four hundred women who had been made prisoners on the field, or overtaken in the pursuit. The mention of this instance of wanton and unmanly ferocity is not made from any partiality to the cause of Charles, from which no one is more free than the writer, but from a conviction that in history, the faults of no party should be concealed from a respect to their principles, and as an illustration of what cannot be too distinctly or generally understood—the brutalising influence of a protracted state of warfare upon all engaged in it, however pure their motives, or however necessary or even unavoidable a recourse to arms may have been in the first instance.

time of its charters, the seal and mace of the Corporation, which Throsby gravely calls their "regalia," disappeared, as might have been predicted, during the general confusion.^s If the personal possessions of the rich alone had suffered from the rapacity of the plunderers, our surprise as well as our commiseration would be less extensively called into requisition by the infliction of a privation of but temporary continuance, and which was naturally to be expected under existing circumstances. Many of those possessed of but moderate means of livelihood, however, who were involved in the common calamity, were at once reduced to utter ruin and the last degree of wretchedness by the loss of their whole property; and it has been said, no doubt with truth, that numbers of the poorer inhabitants, who were utterly unable to answer the demands made upon them, were compelled to march in the condition of captives for some time with the soldiery on their quitting the town, until the sum required for their ransom should be furnished by their relations.^t

Although I have taken some pains to ascertain the actual loss on both sides during this to us memorable night of contention, I must confess my inability to make more than a general conjecture as to its real amount. Clarendon gives two hundred as the number of royalists killed at the places of assault alone. Simmonds, who visited the town on the next day, states, that he counted more than thirty bodies still lying at the great breach, and that some were to be seen in every street. The whole he reckons at about two hundred, and adds, that in the army of Charles, twenty-eight or thirty officers were killed in the course of the different attacks upon the

^s The writer above mentioned quotes from the entries of the Corporation expenses during the year 1645, as follows:

"Paid to —, to redeem the Town Charters being seized, when the King's forces took the town. No sum mentioned.

"Paid for the Statute Seal to a soldier, 5s.

"Paid for two Seals, the Common Seal, brass: the Mayor's Seal, silver, £1. 9s.

"Paid for the New Mace being silver and gilt, £24. 6s. 6d."

^t Although it might have been more aptly introduced in illustration of an earlier part of the Lecture, a list is given beneath of the number of Wills proved and Letters of Administration granted in the Archdeaconry of Leicester for several years, from the first commencement of the troubles in the reign of Charles the

place. Other authorities fix the slain of both parties at from three to four hundred. There is reason to believe that all these estimates fall short of the truth, inasmuch as those killed outright alone appear to be enumerated, without any notice being taken of such as were mortally injured, but removed before death into the neighbouring houses. It may be inferred therefore, that the account afterwards published on the authority of the Committee is on this subject the most correct, which states the loss of both parliamentarians and royalists at seven hundred and nine, from the return of actual burials, taken immediately after the siege, exclusive of many who died at a later period of their wounds.^u Of those less seriously wounded, with the exception of Captain Hurst,^v no mention is made, but it is to be supposed that they

First until the Restoration, as a curious test of the state of public opinion with respect to the security of property at different times during that stormy period.

	WILLS.	ADMINISTRATIONS.	TOTAL.
1639	182	85	267
1640	152	61	213
1641 (Commission of Array issued by king Charles I.).....	139	78	217
1642)	81	54	135
1643 { Civil	34	13	47
1644 { Wars.	26	23	49
1645) (Siege of Leicester)	10	20	30
1646	85	65	150
1647	84	62	146
1648-9 (Execution of king Charles)	48	37	85
1649	75	43	118

*From 1649 to 1660 no Wills proved in, or Administrations granted by,
Diocesan or Archidiaconal Courts.*

1660 (The Restoration)	360	203	563
1661	343	214	557

This information has been kindly supplied by my friend Mr. Stockdale Hardy, to whose readiness to impart the extensive information he possesses with respect no less to general than to local antiquities, and which is well known from his elegant and interesting dissertation relative to the tomb of Mary de Bohun in the Chapel of Trinity Hospital, I am happy to acknowledge that I have been in more instances than one materially indebted.

^u In their "Examination Examined," afterwards published, the Committee professedly on the authority of Col. Leslie, reckon the loss of the royalists at little less than a thousand. Among these the wounded are perhaps intended to be reckoned.

^v Holding a commission of Captain of foot under the Parliament, and at first

were in the usual proportion. Two colonels, four majors, and three other officers of rank, are recorded to have been interred in St. Martin's Church, and several common soldiers in the Churchyard and under the communion table. Ten officers more were buried at St. Margaret's, and several in other churches.^w The principal persons slain on the part of the parliament were Lieut.-Col. Whitbrooke, Captain Farmer, Mr. Palmer^x and Mr. Brown, the latter both independent ministers, who, by the prevalent spirit of the times, it will be remembered, were far from being condemned as acting inconsistently with their profession in aiding with their swords the advancement of the principles which they inculcated. The prisoners comprehended almost the whole of the garrison, including, among others, Col. Grey, Sir Robert Pye, Major Innes, Captain Babington, and Mr. John Angel, Confrater of Wigston's Hospital.^y These, after

reported among the slain. The more minute account of the distribution of the infantry of the garrison under its respective commanders during the assault upon the town, is given as follows in the "Examination Examined:"—"Colonel Grey in his march to the works had in his companie two hundred and thirty, being accounted by Sir Robert Pye. Captain Farmer had one hundred and twentie; Captain Hurst had one hundred, twenty and nine; Lieut.-Col. Battersby about fiftie; (total 529.)" It will be seen that this slightly exceeds the number given at page 41.

^w An item occurs in the Churchwarden's accounts of the parish of St. Martin for 1645, to this effect:—"Paid William Hastwell Mason for leyinge down many graves which were taken up at the burying of several great Officers of the King's army, which was slain at the storminge of the town." I also find the following sentence in Throsby's *Memoirs of the Town and County of Leicester*: "About the year 1759 two human skeletons were found lying about two feet below the surface, near the North Mill, Leicester; two bullets, which we may conjecture were lodged in their bodies, were also found lying by them." He also states, that several skeletons were subsequently discovered in St. Margaret's Cow Pasture, by the workmen employed in forming the bed of the canal—in all probability, like the former, the remains of some of Sir Bernard Astley's brigade, killed during the attack upon the North Mills, and buried near the spot upon which they fell.

^x The death of Mr. Palmer appears somewhat questionable. Whitlocke adds the names of Mr. Rayner and Mr. Sawyer, as hung in cold blood by the royalists, on the authority of a letter from Leicester. But on this subject all other authorities, from which the fact, if true, would neither have escaped distinct mention nor severe animadversion, are entirely silent.

^y Afterwards ordered by the Parliament to be exchanged for Dr. Amhrose, then in confinement. It was at the same time proposed to exchange Sir William Riddell for Mr. Job Grey, and Col. Tillier for Sir Robert Pye. These exchanges were rendered unnecessary by the subsequent recapture of the town.

being conducted into the presence of Prince Rupert, were ordered to be placed under safe custody in different houses.² Captain Hacker, who had, early in the morning, with a few others, made his escape over the river at the Pike head,^a was not more fortunate than his companions in arms, since, after being closely pursued, he was taken near Braunstone, and subjected to the same confinement as the rest. Among other substantial fruits of their victory, the royalists obtained possession of fifty barrels of powder, more than a thousand muskets, and nine pieces of ordnance of different calibres; but their greatest gain was the terror inspired among their adversaries by the signal success with which the opening of the campaign had been distinguished, a feeling so general as not only to induce the parliamentary garrisons at Bagworth, Coleorton, Kirby Bellers, and Burleigh house, to abandon their posts with precipitation, but to cause a general dismay among the leaders of that party in other quarters, and to induce the king, "deceived," to use the expressive words of a writer of the day, "by this lightning before his ruine," to assert in one of his private letters to the queen, that since the commencement of the war, his affairs had never been in so flourishing a condition.

The conduct of Charles himself, at and after the assault, has been differently described by his friends and his enemies. During the proceedings at what I am obliged to consider, as the majority of those in arms against him considered it, his judicial murder, Humphry Browne, of Whitsondine in the county of Rutland, one of the witnesses produced for the prosecution, gave evidence to the effect, "that at such time as the town of Leicester was taken by the king's forces, being in or about June, 1645, Newark fort in Leicester aforesaid was surrendered to the king's forces, upon composition that neither clothes nor money should be taken away from any of the soldiers of the fort which had surrendered, nor any violence offered to them; and that as soon as the said fort was upon such

² Sir Robert Pye and Major Innes were afterwards set at liberty upon their parole to procure exchanges. Both were rewarded by Parliament with a gratuity of £100. in consideration of their services and losses at Leicester.

^a Examination Examined. Corroborated by a note of Simmonds: "About day about 10 of the enemy got out and escaped by the river side, and were followed."

composition surrendered, the king's soldiers, contrary to the articles, fell upon the soldiers, and stripped and wounded many of them; whereupon one of the king's officers rebuking some of these that did so abuse the said parliament's soldiers, this deponent did hear the king cry, 'I do not care if they cut them three times more, for they are mine enemies,' or words to that effect, and that the king was then on horseback in bright armour in the town of Leicester." In opposition to this evidence, it has been affirmed by others, that after the town had been taken, the king rode through the streets, conjuring the conquered by the title of his children to throw down their arms and ask for quarter. The truth probably lies between the two accounts. Arbitrary, perverse, and too often disingenuous, the best friends of Charles must allow him to have been; but it certainly does not appear that wanton and deliberate cruelty is among the faults with which his memory can be considered justly chargeable.

The army of the royalists did not continue long in the possession of their recent conquest. Charles, after leaving Lord Loughborough, whom he had appointed governor of Leicester, with Sir Matthew Appleyard, who had greatly distinguished himself during the night of the assault, as his lieutenant, and a garrison of twelve hundred men, to repair the fortifications in all haste, with the assistance of the trainbands and of additional aid called in from the country, proceeded on his original design of relieving Oxford. Immediately on his departure, his soldiers committed their last act of violence towards the town, by firing the Abbey, which had been his residence for two days after the siege.^b On the first arrival at London of the news of the fall of the most important stronghold in the Midland Counties, the Parliament was addressed (June 4, 1645) by a petition from the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the city, in which the petitioners expressing "their full and deep sense of these pressing miseries under which this city and kingdom now groan, and the imminent ruin which is coming upon both through the relieving of Chester, the unexpressible loss of Leicester, the barbarous cruelty exercised

^b Throsby relates that the old Town Hall in Blue Boar Lane was blown up by the royalists either in the heat of the contest in its neighbourhood, or during their occupation of the town. But for this assertion no authority is cited.

there, the danger of the rest of their garrisons and well affected thereabouts, and the increasing and prevailing of the enemy by sea and land like a mighty torrent," the chief blame of which events was laid to "the non-completing of Sir Thomas Fairfax's army; the calling back of Lieut.-General Cromwell and Major-General Browne from pursuing the enemy; the not advancing of their brethren the Scots into these southern parts," &c. earnestly recommended, among other requests, "that the army of the parliament should be ordered forthwith to march against the enemy, as well for the regaining of Leicester, if it were possible, before it should be made impregnable by fortifications, as also for prevention of the enemy's further surprising of other places of strength, and destroying the rest who had appeared in defence of the parliament." Fairfax was accordingly ordered to lose no time in endeavouring to dispossess the king's forces of their late acquisition; and for this purpose decamping from the neighbourhood of Oxford, he advanced in compliance with the instructions he had received, with the full intention of hazarding a general action, if such a step should be rendered necessary by the movements of the enemy. At the time when he came up with the rear of the royal army, the advanced guard of the cavalry of Charles, who had received information of the breaking up of the siege of Oxford, and determined in consequence upon resuming his march towards the North, was already pushed forward almost as far as Leicester, under Sir Marmaduke Langdale, and there is a tradition that Prince Rupert was quartered at Great Glen, in a house which has only recently been demolished, when he received the summons by which he was recalled, and directed to join the king immediately with all the horse at his disposal. The celebrated, and on the part of the royalists, ill-advised battle of Naseby ensued.^c Leicester, notwithstanding its distance from the spot, might almost be considered a witness of that decisive field; since the foremost parties of the victors were only checked in their pursuit by the sight of its walls, which received the wrecks of the routed army, many of them severely wounded, and only gaining a place of security to die. The king passed through the town on the same day, continuing his flight at full speed towards Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and Fairfax, without losing a moment in following up his

^c June 14, 1645.

success, advancing by Great Glen^d and Oadby, appeared before Leicester on the 16th of June, the town having on the previous night been invested on all sides by his cavalry, under the command of Cromwell. The positions lately held by the contending parties were now singularly reversed. Two demi-cannons and a whole culverin, being part of the very artillery used by the royalists to breach the walls, which had been captured on the field of Naseby, were again pointed against them by the troops of the parliament, and precisely the same spot occupied by their gunners which Rupert had selected for planting his battery a little more than a fortnight before. As the fire of those who now played the part of besiegers in their turn, was directed against that part of the Newark wall which had been most damaged and but imperfectly repaired, a second breach was effected in two or three hours, while Fairfax began to collect ladders, carts, and hand grenades in full view of the garrison, as an intimation of his intention to attempt the place by storm without delay. Leicester, however, was fortunately spared the horrors of a second assault. Lord Loughborough, conscious of the little probability which existed of his being relieved, although he had returned a resolute negative to the first summons of Fairfax, and maintained some shew of defence during the cannonade which ensued, sent out a trumpeter as soon as the breach was imagined practicable, desiring permission to treat respecting the surrender of his post. The Parliamentary Colonels Pickering and Rainsborough were accordingly despatched under a safe conduct to open the necessary negotiations, and after a night spent in deliberation, it was agreed that the works should be given up early on the following morning, (Wednesday, June 18) the garrison being allowed to withdraw, although without arms and with only staves in their hands, to Lichfield.^e It was at the same time stipulated, that all the prisoners recently made by the royalists and still detained in Leicester, should be set at liberty. The military spoils acquired by the parliament by this fresh success were thirty colours, two thousand stand of arms, five hundred

^d One of the despatches of Fairfax to the Parliament, accompanying several intercepted letters, is dated June 16 from this place.

^e The superior officers were suffered to retain their horses and arms.

horses, and fourteen pieces of ordnance, besides abundance of stores and ammunition. Fairfax, notwithstanding the fatigue which his troops had recently undergone, made no stay in the town; but justly deeming every moment of consequence, continued his march rapidly towards the West, after leaving the garrison of Ashby blockaded by a division under Col. John Needham, who was provisionally appointed governor of Leicester for the Parliament.^f The siege of Ashby was continued languidly during the succeeding autumn and winter, but on the 7th of February, as we are informed by Whitlocke, "a party of about eighty horse and forty dragoons were sent from Leicester under the command of a Mr. Mears, to Ashby, who marched with such expedition and secrecy, that they surprised the enemy, and entered the town; took a hundred horse, some rich prizes, and returned to Leicester without opposition." Shortly after this event, the castle was surrendered on articles,

^f On the 18th of June, orders were given by the Parliament at London for a collection on the following day "in all the Churches and Chapels in the cities of London and Westminster, lines of communication, and bills of mortality, for the use of the poor inhabitants of Leicester, and for the relief of the soldiers that were prisoners and had been taken there." And on the 8th of October following, a second Ordinance passed both Houses, commanding a general collection, to be made in the cities, towns, and counties in England, after divine service, for the relief of the people of Leicester. The Committee at Leicester were empowered to take the account of the treasurers, and to aid in the distributions, for which they were to be allowed all reasonable expences. I am obliged to the editor of the Leicester Chronicle for reminding me of a circumstance of some interest in relation to the second siege of the town, viz. that the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress* nearly lost his life on this occasion. The passage in "Grace Abounding," from which the circumstance is ascertained, is however sufficiently obscure; since Bunyan's statement is simply thus: "This also I have taken notice of with thanksgiving, when I was a soldier I with others were drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it: but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room: to which when he had consented, he took my place, and coming to the siege, as he stood centinel, he was shot in the head with a musket bullet, and died." That the place alluded to was Leicester is supposed to be established by the authority of a manuscript in the British Museum, and since Leicester was only once besieged by the forces of the parliament, it has been therefore presumed that Bunyan was attached to the army of Fairfax, in 1645; although it is just as probable, in default of evidence to the contrary, that he was in that of Charles during the first siege. It is singular that neither in his immortal allegories, nor where it might most be expected, in his autobiography, is there a single passage from which the part taken by this great writer in the Civil War can be inferred.

concluded between Col. Needham and Lord Loughborough, and its fortifications ordered to be demolished. Five pieces of ordnance were obtained from this formidable fortress, which had so long proved a constant annoyance to the people of Leicester. The garrison were allowed to march out (March 4th, 1646) with loaded muskets, matches lit, banners displayed, and a single brass gun, to Bridgenorth, and the sequestrations imposed upon the estates of the Earl of Huntingdon and his brother were ordered to be taken off as soon as the sleighting of the works at Ashby should be effected. Belvoir Castle, which had been besieged ever since the 20th of November in the preceding year, when the outworks protecting it were stormed by Major-General Poyntz, Col. Rossiter, and Adjutant-General Sandys, had capitulated about a month before, the cause of Charles being considered altogether hopeless in Leicestershire, as indeed by this time it had become in almost every other part of the kingdom.

These are, I believe, the last events of any consequence in the military history of the County, but one or two additional circumstances are yet briefly to be noticed, as connected with the subject before us. The first is, that Charles, now in the condition of a captive, slept in Leicester the very night before his arrival at Holmby, where, as it is well known, he was seized by Col. Joyce, and delivered into the power of those who finally brought him to the scaffold. In every instance, therefore, his presence in this town may be considered as having been a prognostic of evil to that unhappy monarch. In the year 1648, moreover, when every attempt was being made by the more violent party, into whose hands the reins of government had then fallen, to induce such a state of feeling in the nation, as might enable them to carry forward the trial and execution of the king, a petition was presented at the bar of the House of Commons from the Committee, Gentry, and other inhabitants of the County of Leicester,^s which darkly but by no means feebly advocates the terrible step in contemplation, since after a preamble in which all the popular charges against Charles, usually stated in the most furious manifestos of the times, and which it is to be regretted that Milton condescended after-

^s 4to. London, printed for G. Calvert, 1648.

wards to copy, are mentioned, such as his betrayal of the town of Rochelle, the poisoning of his father, &c. with the significant comment, "All which have made our ears to tingle and our hearts to tremble, expecting what satisfaction you might have to these loud and heaven-provoking crimes," it concludes in the following manner:—

"These premises considered, we desire for ourselves and the whole nation, we may not be left in the dark concerning these suggestions and charges; which if true, that proceedings may be accordingly, that we may not build our peace upon such ruining foundations: but if otherwise, that his Majesty may be cleared so fully, that we may neither fear your treating with him, nor trusting him in the great and weighty affairs of the three kingdoms. And we most earnestly beg that, since your God and ours hath put so many principal enemies into your hands, even to wonder, that impartial and personal justice may be speedily administered, which we look at as the undoubted remedy of all our maladies; for justice exalteth a nation, and establisheth a throne. In the obtaining of these we suppose but just requests, we are ready to adventure our all with you, and for you.

"And shall ever duly pray, &c."

After the trial of Charles the First, at which Lord Grey of Groby sat as one of the judges,^h I do not find that our County was

^h The name of Peter Temple, which occurs in the list of the Leicester Committee, is also to be found among those who signed the warrant for the execution of Charles the First. Sir Arthur Haselrig, although nominated one of the members of the High Court of Justice, took no part in its proceedings. In the note to page 28, where it is stated that Col. Hacker was tried on the charge of signing the death warrant of Charles, the second warrant, directed to the executioner on the morning of the 30th of January, is of course meant. Lord Grey of Groby, of whom mention is so often made in connection with the Civil War in Leicestershire, ended his restless and turbulent career in 1657, at his seat at Wirthorp, in Northamptonshire. In 1655 he was committed by Cromwell to safe custody in Windsor Castle, on the suspicion of being concerned in the conspiracy of Overton, Wildman, and others, and is charged by Noble with having taken a part the very year of his death in that of Venner and the Fifth Monarchy men. This charge Godwin (*Hist. of the Commonwealth*, vol. iv. p. 378) endeavours to disprove. His opponent Henry Hastings Lord Loughborough, was created after the Restoration Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, in consideration of his former services in support of the royal cause. He died in 1666, having spent the latter

the scene of any occurrence worth notice for a considerable period. The fortifications thrown up for the defence of Leicester were, in consequence of the peaceful aspect of the neighbourhood, ordered to be levelled in 1647, and from that time to the end of the Protectorate it does not appear that this tranquillity was to any extent disturbed by the partial and easily suppressed insurrections in more distant parts of the kingdom. On the death of Cromwell, Leicestershire was not behind in sending expressions of condolence, and assurances of fidelity to his son; but early in the year 1659, a petition yet preserved was presented to George Monk, miscalled the Honest, by the High Sheriff and others, in which an anticipation may clearly be traced on the part of the petitioners, that the star of monarchy would before long be once more upon the ascendant.

Such are the particulars which I have thought most deserving of your attention in the History of this Town and County, during perhaps the most critical period of our existence as a nation. The greater part of them will of course be found in the papers relative to the Civil War, collected and reprinted by the most industrious and elaborate of the local historians of England; but for many facts I have also been indebted to the king's pamphlets in the British Museum, which have been carefully consulted for the materials of this paper, and more especially to two which Nichols has omitted to publish in his Appendix, the first entitled, "A more exact Relation of the Siege laid to the Town of Leicester, how it was maintained and how won, and what quarter was given by the king's forces, delivered to the Honourable House of Commons by Sir Robert Pye, governor of the said town, and Major James Ennis"—the second, "An Examination examined, being a full answer to Major Innes' Relation of the taking of Leicester." The latter of these publications contains, among other information, the list of those who composed the Parliamentary Committee during the actual time of the siege, which as I believe it is not to be found elsewhere, I may be allowed to read for the benefit of any who being better versed, or, as they may easily be, more interested in county genealogies than myself, may

part of his life principally at his mansion called Loughborough House, in Lambeth, and was buried in the Collegiate Church at Windsor.

not be displeased at discovering among them the representatives of families still living in our neighbourhood. The list runs thus :

THOS. LORD GREY OF GROOBY,
 THEOPH. GREY, ESQRE.
 SIR ARTHUR HESLERIGGE, BART.
 SIR MARTIN LISTER, KT.
 SIR EDWARD HARTOP, JUN. KT.
 SIR GEO. VILLIERS, BART.
 SIR THOS. HARTOP, KT.
 SIR ROGER SMITH, KT.
 JOHN ST. JOHN,
 THOM. BABINGTON, SEN.
 WM. BEMBRIDGE,
 THOS. BRUDENELL,
 JOHN WHATTON,
 ARCHDALE PALMER,
 PETER TEMPLE,
 ARTHUR STAVELY,
 HENRY SMITH,
 THOS. HESILRIGGE,
 FRAS. HACKER,
 JOHN STAFFORD,
 JOHN BROWNE,
 WM. HEWIT,
 JOHN GOODMAN, Esquires,
 FRAS. SMALLEY,
 JOHN SWYNFEN,
 VALENTINE GOODMAN, Gentlemen,
 and
 RICHARD LUDLAM,ⁱ
 WILL. STANLEY,
 EDMUND CRADOCK,
 Aldermen of Leicester.

With the enumeration of these names I take leave of the subject; merely adding, that if with every effort to avoid it I have

ⁱ According to Nichols, Richard Ludlam was Mayor of Leicester in 1645.

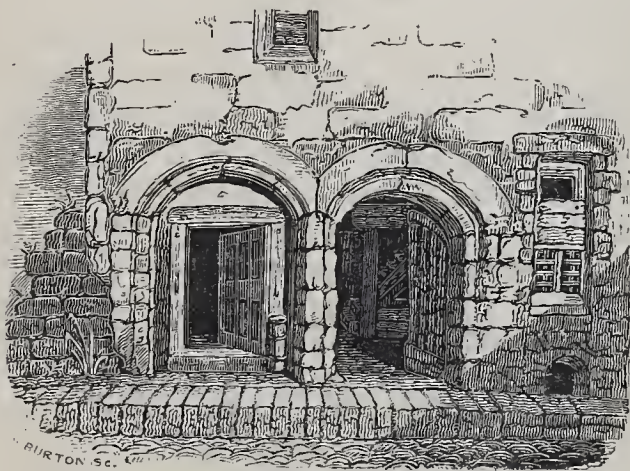
inadvertently fallen into any misstatements or inaccuracies, I shall deem it a friendly office on the part of any one to whom they may be obvious, to afford me the means of correcting them. Fortunately for us, the attention of those resident here has not been very frequently drawn to this part of the annals of their town by the remotest apprehension of the recurrence of similar events. Many generations have passed since the tumult of battle was heard in our streets, or the circumstances of war presented before our eyes in any other shape than that of amusing pageantry and bloodless evolutions. Labours far different from the task of watching in arms the movements of an approaching enemy, or of taking counsel to defend our hearths from forcible intrusion, now engage our Municipal authorities, and the ladies of Leicester, as I believe we may all assert from experience, have long selected characters little resembling those of Britomartis and Clorinda as models for imitation. That the same may be said with still greater truth in years yet to come; and that those who succeed us in the fitful fever of life may look back upon our less serious differences with surprise equal to that with which we regard the fierce and sanguinary feuds of our forefathers—or rather, if I may be allowed to bring the conclusion of this paper somewhat more extensively under Bolingbroke's well-known definition of History with respect to *ourselves*, and to subjoin an admonitory moral to matter capable enough of affording it—that, warned by the example of those who have gone before us, of the terrible extent to which the worst passions may be developed in civil contention, we may continue, amidst such differences as exist, and I believe for the good of society, must exist among us, to act under the guidance of such a spirit as should influence men descended from a common ancestry—inhabiting a common town—professing obedience to the same law of charity—and for many points of difference possessing many also in which we may cordially unite, is a wish, in the expression of which I am confident I shall meet with the assent of all who compose the present assembly. One observation more, and I shall intrude no longer upon a patience, which has already, I fear, been tried to the uttermost. We are all ready to acknowledge the truth of the common observation, that objects with which we are daily familiar, however valuable in themselves, become at length but lightly

esteemed; and that we are thus often disposed to look with little respect upon what possesses the highest interest in the sight of others before whom it is less frequently presented. Such an indifference has, I fear, been hitherto far too prevalent in our town—a fact which I infer not only from many other circumstances, but from a late instance in particular, of the unnecessary destruction of one of the finest specimens of the domestic architecture of the middle ages—I may add, too, intimately connected with one of the most important events in our national records—which, whatever may be thought of it here, has always been looked upon elsewhere as no slight stain upon our armorial ermine. For myself I can truly say, that to me, a comparative stranger in the place, and interested in it by no early associations, the very wild flowers waving over walls once shattered by the iron tempest of warfare, and witnesses to the devotion of brave men asserting to the death the principles they were armed to support—which have seen the banners of King and Commonwealth unfurled by turns against their defenders, or beneath which the eagles of Imperial Rome have glittered, appear to possess somewhat of a sacred character; and if this is considered enthusiasm, it is an enthusiasm which I heartily wish were more generally felt and avowed among us. Such a feeling, common in all ages, has, wherever indulged, if not carried to extravagance, invariably proved more or less beneficial. Even in the midst of the intoxication of successful vengeance against a hated city, let us remember that

“the great Æmathian conqueror bid spare
The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground—”

and that the Roman general who had entered Athens at the head of his victorious legions, and was deluging the streets of the city with the blood of its inhabitants, struck with the records of antiquity around him, stopped short in his desolating career, and consented to spare the many for the sake of the few—the degenerate living in consideration of the illustrious dead. This, however, is a subject which I have no wish to pursue further. It is one on which I should not have ventured to touch, had I not known that in

speaking thus freely, I might safely trust for indulgence to the good sense and intelligence of those around me; or had I not considered that it would be little to our credit, if while enriched by objects of interest to all in any degree versed in the history of their country sufficient to distinguish us from most other towns in the empire, Leicester should at the same time acquire the not very desirable distinction of being among the least able to appreciate their possession.



Part of the North front of Prince Rupert's Tower, in 1821.

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